Inside: Argentina's Popular Uprising, Surreal Radio Resistance, plus anarchist spirituality with Gary Snyder, Peter Lamborn Wilson, & Max Cafard

Fifth estate

Winter 2002/03 VOL. 37 # 4 (359) $3

the spirit of Anarchy

Welcome to the fourth *Fifth Estate* of 2002!!

We have not published four issues in one year since the late 1980s. As much as any of our magazines this year, this edition represents the contribution of many heads, hearts, and hands in our ever-evolving collective.

Although we love the front cover art of May Thistle, its symbology may threaten the penology of the department of corrections in the state of Oregon. According to notices we've received from prison officials, anarchism's classic circle-A is a dangerous gang symbol!

In addition to this delicious cover drawing dedicated to our issue's theme section (which begins on page 19), James Koehnline provided the sumptuous collages for the inner pages. We also welcome the photography of Andy Stern to the back cover as he chronicles the uprising in Argentina for a special feature edited by David Solnit and the FE Collective.

We packed production of this edition into the days following an annual journey by several of our collective members to protest the US Army's School of the Americas at Ft. Benning, Georgia. There's several tastes of that trip from the Peace Bikers journal on page 36 to an interview with our favorite anti-SOA folksinger on page 3 to some puppetista photos by Sunfrog.

While this weekend of protest reminded us of the challenges we face in the new American security state, the upcoming months invite more resistance. Check out our calendar on page 46 for a few ideas.

The FE's revival this year has invigorated all of us; check out some of the challenges from our readers beginning on page 38.

To continue publishing at the same pace in 2003, we need your support. Subscribe. Become an FE sustainer. Support our book distro. As we pay no staff, all funds raised go directly to the project.

Send us reports from your communities. **The Deadline for the Spring '03 "Food & Sustainability" FE is February 1st**

Remembering Harry Hay

Harry Hay, "Father of the Gay rights movement," died this October at the age of 90. Harry founded the Mattachine Society in 1950, the first gay rights organization in the United States. He was kicked out a few years later because of his Communist Party affiliation. In 1979 he co-founded the Radical Faeries, a loose-knit, anarchistic, back-to-the-land spiritual/radical/irreverent movement. We came to know him and love him through our friendships developed at faerie gatherings.

Harry's role in the faeries was often fun and light, and other times contentious. For one, he urged faeries to engage in radical politics and became frustrated with the lack of response his call to action often received. Some saw him as a "leader" of the movement, while others detested the notion of leadership (Harry himself rejected the idea that he should have any more say or inherent knowledge than anyone else). He definitely expressed himself forcefully, and in later years found himself defending the notion that radical faeries should be "gay men," while others were pushing for a broader definition of gender inclusivity.

Harry Hay was a believer and fighter, who stood up for gay rights, workers, indigenous rights, and feminism against tremendous odds. His role in the radical faeries, the larger queer movement and in radical politics are explored in the biography by Stuart Timmons, *The Trouble With Harry Hay: Founder of the Modern Gay Movement* (Alyson Publications, 1990).

—MaxZine, Nov. 2002

fifth estate

The Fifth Estate (FE) is a cooperative, nonprofit project, publishing since 1965. As opposed to professionals who publish to secure wages or invest in the information industry, our collective consists of volunteer writers, artists, and editors—friends who produce the paper as an expression of resistance to an unjust and destructive society.

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Detroit Collective/Subscription Office
PO Box 201016, Ferndale, MI 48220

Tennessee Collective/Editorial Office
PO Box 6, Liberty, TN 37095
FifthEstate@pumpkinhollow.net 615 536 5999

Stop the war . . . but don't stop there

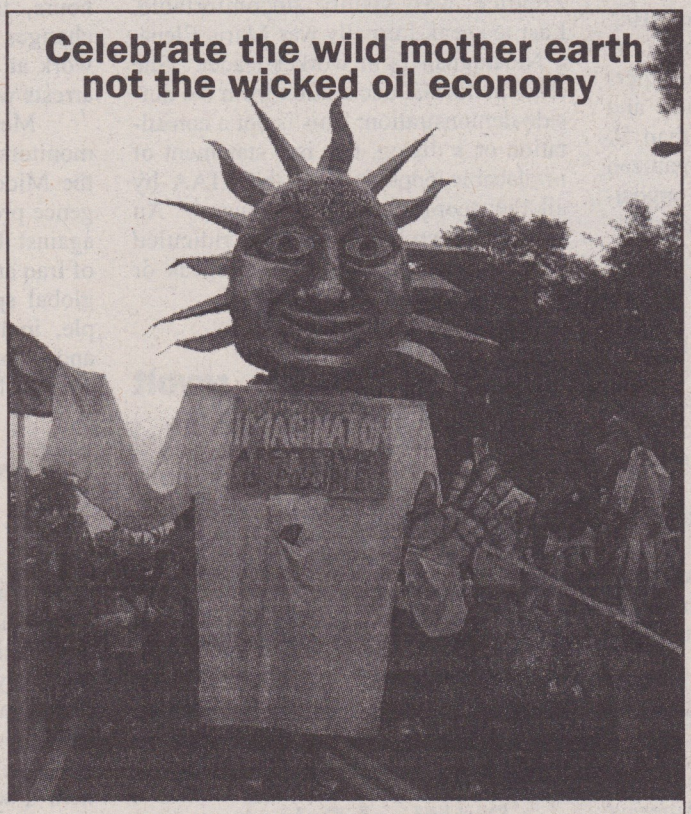
Editors' Note: The following excerpts come from subversive anti-war flyers distributed at mass demonstrations; the first comes from an FE collective member in Tennessee, the second from the Chicago Surrealists, and the third from comrades in the San Fransisco Bay Area.

The new ultraright doctrine of global domination that Bush has made his mantra is seen by some liberals as dramatic deviance from American principles. However, while imperial chickenhawk cowboys killing children and reaping the military-industrial profits may seem distasteful to most, it resembles American foreign policy verbatim since the dawn of the last century. Throughout the 1900s, the monsters of money and might wrought misery for millions.

Now, using fear as a pretext, the international policemen have gone public with their piranha-like plans to pillage and plunder the planet. Don't be fooled that the American elite has ever wanted anything less than total domination. Neither the scourge of neoconservatism nor the lie of neoliberalism can save us: both are vapid, necrophilic pseudo-ideologies that love money more than life itself

All over the world, people have risen up to resist global capitalism, abolish universal wage slavery, and fight fundamentalism in all its forms. Millions in the streets in every corner of the planet have looked to Americans for solidarity in the struggle against institutionalized injustice and multilateral misery. Will we have the courage to challenge the crooked corporate charlatans masquerading as our leaders?

Let's unite to stop the war, but don't stop there. Celebrate the wild mother earth not the wicked oil economy; yes to imagination not domination; choose life, not death. Another world is not only possible, it is necessary. Will we make it real?



Puppetistas help protest all war & envision a new world outside the gates of Fort Benning in Columbus, Georgia

Another Stupid War

Make no mistake: The proposed "regime change" in Baghdad is solely about replacing a fractious death-squad subcontractor with a more passively compliant one. A New World Order "police action" aimed at Iraq would provide US capital with easy access to twenty-two percent of the world's available petroleum, meaning less dependence upon the doddering feudal oil oligarchy of Saudi Arabia. It is no accident that the "interim" government in Afghanistan that replaced the Taliban ruling clique is led by a former consultant to the Unocal oil company who is protected round-the-clock from assassination by a contingent of US Green Berets.

We say: Neither ruling-class war nor imperial peace! The grubby, counter-revolutionary opportunism of "realistic" realpolitik is no excuse for industrialized mass murder. When the U.S. government's stooges of Capital try to blackmail us with the pseudo-choice of being "either with us or against us," we wholeheartedly refuse. In this as in all inter-capitalist rivalries, we support neither side.

We say:

No to Bush's war-plans and globalization's death industry! No to the outlawing of workers' movements! No to "austerity programs" and the "structural readjustment" dictates of the World Trade Organization, the International Monetary Fund, and the World Bank! No to misery and miserabilism in all their forms!

Yes to revolt! Yes to freedom now! Yes to international workingclass solidarity! Yes to life, imagination, the Earth—and their marvelous possibilities!

Insubordination

If we talk to the representatives of this warmongering social order, we are still granting them the final say. Such participation is simply participation in our continued slavery. Instead, those of us exploited, excluded, or simply disgusted by this social order need to talk with each other and about how we can actively refuse the state's war, encouraging non-compliance, disobedience, and revolt—in short, total insubordination to the efforts of the masters of this world to once more send us out to shed each others' blood in their interests.

As long as the state exists and Capital rules the world, war will continue killing us. Only insubordination and total revolt can bring this to an end, and open the possibility of a world where no one can order anyone else to go out and kill.

Resistance to Genocide

While some celebrated the 510th anniversary of Columbus's arrival in the western hemisphere, thousands of others protested his legacy of genocide and enslavement. In Chiapas, more than 50 peasant and civil organizations organized 12 roadblocks. In Colorado, in opposition to an annual Italian (white) pride pro-Columbus march, AIM mobilized nearly 2500 people to march from the four directions with red, black, yellow and white flags to the state capitol to "Transform Columbus Day", while hundreds of anarchists confronted the parade in solidarity. In Arizona and Sonora, 250 people marched on the U.S./Mexico border to show their opposition to border policies, the takeover and separation of indigenous lands, and the subjugation of indigenous people. Native Americans and others converged on Washington, DC where someone defaced a statue of Columbus.

Ecuador Anti-FTAA Actions

Thousands of small-scale farmers, indigenous groups, students, and activists from around Latin America came together in Quito, Ecuador in early November to protest plans for a US-backed free trade agreement which would tear down so called trade barriers from Alaska to Argentina starting in 2005. Trade Ministers from around the Western Hemisphere were in Quito for a two-day meeting on a preliminary accord for the Free Trade Agreement of the Americas (FTAA, ALCA in Spanish).

Despite heavy police repression, determined demonstrators persisted, shouting that the free trade zone would turn Latin America into a US colony. At least 60 people, part of a march on the meeting venue, were injured in clashes with military and police forces who used tear gas and fired guns at the protesters. At one point, a police platoon joined the protests in demanding that the 34 Trade Ministers agree to receive a delegation from the demonstrators carrying a declaration of opposition to the FTAA.

65 protesters, included activists from all over the Americas, managed to get into the hotel, guarded by heavily armed special forces soldiers. Activists from Latin America took turns making speeches and reading statements from their groups denouncing the FTAA. Many Trade Ministers smirked as the US was denounced time and time again, while US Trade Representative Robert Zoellick was visibly uncomfortable. Last to speak formally was Maria Elena, a Nicaraguan farm worker leader. She read the formal declaration from the outside demonstration: "this is not a consultation or a dialog, this is a statement of implacable opposition to the FTAA by all the peoples' of the Americas." An American embarassed and ridiculed Zoellick for not being able to speak or understand Spanish.

New York teens revolt against Police State

On Halloween in East Aurora, NY, as many as 200 high school students threw eggs and bottles at the cops in response to an incendiary flier urging property destruction against the notoriously abusive local police force. Seventeen teens were arrested for disorderly conduct, and one for a felony egg throwing. Although reaction to events have been mixed, many parents have sided with the youth in their condemnation of police behavior.

Political Prisoner Denied Medical Treatment

(10/23/02) - Robert "Seth" Hayes is a former member of the Black Panther Party and the Black Liberation Army and a political prisoner who has been jailed for the past 30 years. On October 3rd, 2002, he was moved against his will from the hospital ward where he had been receiving treatment for Hepatitis C and type 2 Diabetes to the general prison population in Clinton Correctional Facility (CCF) in Dannemora, New York. Supporters are asked to contact administrators responsible for the transfer to demand proper medical care for Hayes and all other Diabetic prisoners. Contact the Robert "Seth" Hayes Emergency Medical Committee at (514) 848-7585, or rshemc02@yahoo.ca for prison officials' contact information.

To offer support to Hayes, write him at: Robert "Seth" Hayes #74A-2280, Clinton Correctional Facility, Box 2001, Dannemora, New York, 12929, USA.

US Spy Base Blockaded

On October 24th, the US Spy Base at Menwith Hill in Yorkshire, England was blockaded. Protestors locked on to two entrance access gates starting at 5am. The blockade lasted 4 and a half hours, targeting three scheduled shift changes. 750-1000 staff arriving for work at the base were turned away. No arrests were made.

Menwith Hill is a US spy base that monitors communications in Europe and the Middle East. It is a hub of intelligence procurement for the so-called War against Terror and the planned bombing of Iraq and is one of the key bases for the global spy system Echelon. 3,000 people, including US intelligence officers and support personnel from the UK, work at Menwith Hill.

Forest Activists Crash Timber Baron Conference

On November 8th Dallas, Texas, the 110th annual conference of the North American Wholesale Lumber Association (NAWLA) was joyfully disrupted by forest activists from Texas and Cascadia, who hung a three-story banner from the seventh story of the hotel's atrium. The banner was timed to coincide with a workshop hosted by (Corporate Forest Raper) Boise on how to build your corporate environmental image. It read: NAWLA AND BOISE: LUMBERING TOWARDS EXTINCTION. Activists then crashed a fancy luncheon with a twelve-piece revolutionary marching band, where they threw sawdust in the air and passed out leaflets to the stunned attendees. Outside the hotel, bridges, boxes and billboards were plastered with poster-sized wheatpastes declaring, "NAWLA = Blood Timber".

Fifth Estate seeks short reports from actions against war, capital, authority, and to create a better world. The deadline for the next issue is February 1st.

fifthestate@pumpkinhollow.net

Anti-War Momentum Builds

In the face of a seemingly inevitable campaign driven by the capitalists and their warmongering politicians, anti-war sentiment around the globe continues to grow. As resistance diversifies and broadens in political scope, fresh faces appear in the streets, voicing a firm rejection of the rulers' policies.

In late September, some half million persons converged in London to oppose the push for war with Iraq. In Florence, Italy, one million people took to the streets against the war and corporate globalization during the European Social Forum.

On October 6th, the first anniversary of the bombing of Afghanistan, Not In Our Name organized nationwide protests against the "war on the world," political detentions, and civil liberties restrictions. The actions across the US marked the growing breadth and depth of opposition to war in Iraq. Demonstrations were seen in communities large and small, ranging from tens of thousands of persons in Central Park, NYC, to one hundred people rallying in Sandpoint, Idaho.

In a pre-emptive strike for peace, hundreds of thousands marched throughout the world on October 26 to protest George Bush's ill-conceived war against the people of Iraq. Almost two hundred thousand marched and surrounded the White House in Washington, DC (Bush refused to surrender), while on the opposite coast in San Francisco 80,000 marched in the streets. Also in San Francisco, a breakaway contingent of 500+ anti-capitalists laid siege to the local Armed Forces recruiting station. In St. Paul, Minnesota, over 10,000 people protested against a possible war. More than 600 rallied in Nashville, TN. In Portland, OR, where hundreds marched, several dozen protestors entered a downtown mall and chanted "While you're shopping, bombs are dropping". At a military recruiting station, the literature was rearranged, and some military posters were redecorated with anti-war messages. 2500 plus marched to the house of Secretary of War Donald "Aspartame" Rumsfeld's in Taos, NM.

Other protests, rallies and marches occurred in dozens of US cities. In Europe, demonstrations were held in Berlin, as well as Rotterdam, Amsterdam, Belgium, Barcelona, Zaragoza, Sevilla and several cities in Italy. In Baghdad, a handful of Americans from the Iraq Peace Team (IPT), a project of project of the Chicago-based anti-sanctions movement Voices in the Wilderness demonstrated outside the main United Nations compound.

On November 12, 50 women spelled out the word "Peace" in Marin County, CA with their naked bodies, hoping to draw attention to the threat of war in Iraq.

A Fine Autumn Weekend In DC

A brief report on the latest scuffle with the forces of globalization and their security apparatus

by john johnson

Once again the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund scaled back big annual meetings in DC in the face of popular opposition. Folks from the DC Anti-Capitalist Convergence organized a People's Strike for Friday, September 27th. The call was out for affinity groups to engage in autonomous actions to disrupt business as usual for the ruling elites in DC. Many DC commuters stayed home, so traffic was light. There were probably 1000 radicals in the streets, and a large critical mass clogged up some traffic. However, the 3700 pigs were very well organized, and any time they caught up with a large group, they corralled protesters with bikes, motorcycles and armor clad storm troopers.

Mass preemptive arrests were the order of the day. There was an overwhelming naivete of "let's stick together in a big mass and we'll be safe" going around, when in fact, it was the big groups who got surrounded and popped, while smaller affinity groups got away, some even breaking through police lines to do so. Overall there were 649 arrests (including innocent morning commuters and mainstream media). While many reported on the empowerment of jail solidarity, many were bummed about losing gear and bikes to the state while having to give up ID's and cash to get free. The ACC did develop some good propaganda. A flier titled "sorry for the inconvenience" linked local DC issues of homelessness and poverty with corporate globalization in plain language. Many of these fliers made into the hands of morning commuters stuck in traffic jams or walking past spirited protests.

The Mobilization for Global Justice organized a mass march for Saturday. There were maybe 10,000 folks from all over the world in the streets. The MGJ was trying to forge a broad coalition including radicals, liberals and progressives, so they got permits and their march was controlled by the cops once it started. At the World Bank HQ, folks blockaded key entrances and hung red "caution" tape as a symbolic "quarantine against infectious corporate greed." The march included an "Eco-Bloc," a very rowdy Black Bloc and Revolutionary Noise Brigade, and a sizable feeder march demanding access to free AIDS medication for the poor around the world.

All in all it was a good show of dissent, but there were not enough folks to completely pull off the desired action agenda of the organizers. The State is definitely learning from our tactics and evolving responses that they deem appropriate. Our global justice street movements need to do the same.

If our numbers are going to be low in the streets while folks are focused on stopping the war, maybe we should stay home, build the movement, and resume convergences when our numbers can overwhelm the pigs. There are plenty of ways to link local and global anti-capitalist struggles.

To do better in the streets, we need more trainings, local actions, pamphlets on street tactics, etc. Anarchists can create fertile training grounds for new comrades, build alliances and practice mutual aid at these events. They shouldn't just be opportunities for the old left and the old new left to dominate coalitions and control the media messages.

Tennescene

by john johnson

Long time readers of the Fifth Estate will remember the section called "Detroit Seen" which brought news from the radical scene in Detroit. We hope to continue "scene" reports in the new incarnation of the Fifth Estate.

Howdy y'all! (The Eco-Anarcho-Communalist Faction of the Society for the Preservation of the Good Parts of Southern Culture officially declares "y'all" a new, non-sexist alternative for addressing groups. People who still say "you guys" are obviously not concerned with preservation of our fine langauge, or worse, they are yankees.)

Well, the Fifth Estate has gone South. But really folks, it's just a geographical move.

Tennessee may not be a hotbed of the Revolution like Eugene or Detroit, but we do have our fair share of radicals who are into challenging the death machine in our own creative ways. There is a great diversity of landscape and culture here. The dominant politics are reactionary, and the local ruling elites have invited all sorts of multi-national corporate robber barons and carpet baggers in to exploit the local people and pillage the local landscapes. The mountain cultures are alive and struggling with corporate colonizaton just has urban cultures are dealing with similar issues of homogenization and gentrification.

Tennessee is blessed with some fine homegrown dissent. Southerners, ex-yankees, and ex-westerners all work together to stem the tide of capitalist destruction, and put forth positive and hopeful revolutionary politics. Political comrades are hard to find, so committed radicals find all sorts of alliances with liberals and progressives on various campaigns. Despite the hostile political climate, awesome projects are underway across the many bioregions of the state. Here is a quick rundown:

In Knoxville, eco-anarchists with Katuah Earth First! (KEF!) have organized tree sits, blockades and banner hangings to protest road construction around town and in the Smoky Mountains. Knoxville also has its own pirate radio station, Knoxville First Amendment Radio (KFAR). There is an active Food Not Bombs chapter, and an Anti-Racist Action chapter to challenge a resurgence in Klan activity in East Tennessee. The Oak Ridge Environmental Peace Alliance (OREPA) has been organizing to stop nuclear weapons production at the government's facility in Oak Ridge (birth place of the A-bomb). OREPA hosts mass demonstrations and civil disobedience. Check out: www.stopthebombs.org.

Tennessee is blessed with some fine homegrown dissent. Southerners, ex-yankees, and ex-westerners all work together to stem the tide of capitalist destruction

Down in Chattanooga, KEF! has organized some very well attended anti-war protests and hosted various travelling radical educational events such as the US Out of Columbia Roadshow tour. Radicals in east Tennessee have also been organizing against the Tennessee Valley Authority and its plans to produce tritium. Folks have also been organizing against TVA's plans to restart the Unit One nuclear reactor at Browns Ferry in Alabama.

KEF! has also been a leading proponent for forest protection and against the spread of rampant industrial clear cutting and destruction of our beautiful, diverse native forests.

Also in Chattanooga, much to the dismay of the local yuppies, Food Not Bombs continues to serve hot, free vegetarian food every Sunday to a very cool "community of the occasion" that consists of homeless people, radicals, punks, progressives, and anyone else who happens to be in the park.

Near Chattanooga, the folks at Moonshadow offer a variety of workshops on art, ecology and sustainable living and have hosted all sorts of environmental groups. Here, we find the secret headquarters of the south's most notorious gang of fern-sniffing tree huggers — Katuah Earth First!

Middle Tennessee is home to several rural radical communities: Pumpkin Hollow, Short Mountain Sanctuary, and IDA. Besides being the new FE headquarters, PH is home to one of North America's only anarchist rural infoshops. SMS is a long running "radical faerie" commune. They raise goats and veggies, and throw one of the best mayday parties this side of anywhere. IDA is a queer arts community that offers zany theatrical and musical events and tours and is home to Idapalooza, an outdoor queer music festival. Nearby is Tennessee's most infamous commune, the Farm.

In addition to the continued work of folks at the Peace and Justice Center, the Nashville scene is ripe with a new radicalism. In addition to a new Food Not Bombs chapter and large anti-war mobilizations, two new DIY-spaces The Muse and The Rule of Thirds gallery regularly offer anarchist films, performances, open mics, art exhibits and dance parties.

Eco-radicals in the southern mountains stay in touch through seasonal campouts hosted by Earth First! groups across the region. Anarchist networking is mostly informal, but large contingents travel to most mass protests. The Southern Girls' Convention, hosted by various southern communities for three years now, will be held in Asheville, NC March 14-16, 2003.

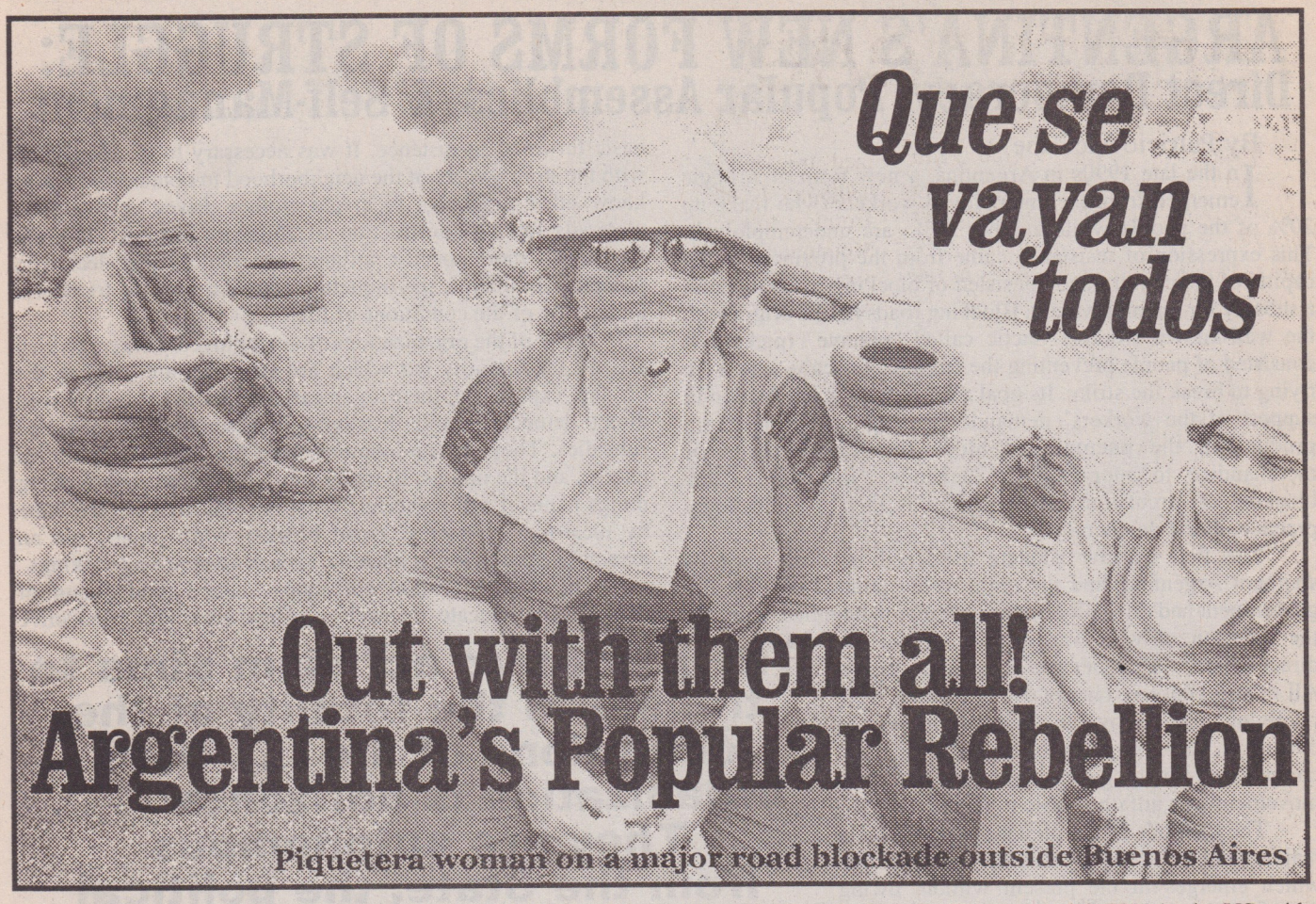
All y'all are invited to come visit and help further the cause of revolution everywhere across the South. After all, it's not just a racist backwater anymore.

Contacts

Katuah Earth First!
2131 Riverside Dr. Knoxville, TN 37915
zorgonus@yahoo.com

Atlanta IndyMedia
www.atlanta.indymedia.org

Moonshadow/Sequatchie Valley Institute
Route One Box 304
Whitwell, TN 37397
www.svionline.org



Que se vayan todos

Out with them all! Argentina's Popular Rebellion

Piquetera woman on a major road blockade outside Buenos Aires

The neighbors had broken into and occupied the bank building as I arrived in Parque Lezama. Middle aged and scruffy young activists carried out debris, scrubbed windows and floors and hung banners with the name of their assemblia popular and another that said "We are nothing. We want to be everything."

This was my welcome to Buenos Aires this past July, where I worked with neighborhood assemblies and a "piquetero" group to make puppets and street theater, and visited family relatives.

Argentina's popular rebellion is the most all-encompassing insurrection in recent history. Like the Zapatista uprising in Chiapas, it marks a break from past forms of struggle. Argentina is the first country to default on its "debt" due to a popular uprising—a serious challenge to global capital. And this society is more similar to most of North America than the indigenous communities of Chiapas. The two incredible and inspiring articles that follow give a taste and some explanation of the forms of struggle and the new society being created by the people of Argentina.

Before last year, my middle class Argentine relatives never expected their economy to collapse, to lose the majority of their life savings, to have bank accounts frozen, to suffer for a year with no job, or to work two full time jobs to keep the family housed and fed.

The Argentine economy was looted by the same banks, financial institutions, and corporations that drive the rest of the world's doomsday economy. Even without a collapse here in the US, corporate and government corruption is more visible than ever. Even before the Enron scandal, 72% in the US said corporations had too much power, according to a *Business Week* poll. While talking heads try interpreting the recent US elections, they avoid the obvious: the dramatic low turnout shows a crisis of representative democracy. The US has had to manipulate September 11, fabricate regular "alerts" to keep us terrorized, and engage in a constant war drive just to keep a lid on things. The system is in permanent crisis and the global movement of movements is stronger and more connected than ever before in history.

Argentina offers a powerful model and a challenge. For me, the challenge includes:

- Can we innovate new forms of resistance that break out of the old, often marginal forms of protest?
- Can we go beyond our limiting labels and subcultures and find new language that opens people up to common sense revolutionary ideas? (John Holloway has noted that "the language [of the left— and I would add, of anarchism] is so worn out that they [the old words] become harmful for those who use them.")
- Can we develop the skills, ability to listen, and patience to make our groups and movements reflect the way we want our community and the world to be?
- Can we help catalyze a diverse popular movement that goes beyond issue politics to get to the roots of our problems and go beyond opposition to create positive alternatives?

— David Solnit, San Francisco, November 2002

all photos by Andrew Stern

ARGENTINA'S NEW FORMS OF STRUGGLE:
Direct Democracy, Popular Assemblies, & Self-Managment

By Patricio McCabe

In the late 1990s in Argentina, a new form of struggle emerged from the unemployed workers (who make up 20% of the people while another 20% are underemployed). This expression of resistance came from the provinces to the capital of the country and consisted of blocking roads to claim a subsidy for unemployment. Blocking roads has its origin with the well-known workers' tactic called "piquete" (picket). It consisted of people preventing the entrance of scabs who were trying to break the strike. Its goal was to prevent production in support of the workers' demands. Today, thrown out from production, the unemployed block the transportation of merchandize to support their demands. Not only is this blocking of circulation novel, but so is their organizational practice: direct democracy.

The first massive piquete happened in a province of southern Argentina, and the mass media pointed out that the government had difficulty finding a leader to negotiate with. To the question of who was responsible for the direct action, the piqueteros responded simply: All of us! Those in charge of negotiating were revolving and removable. Without leaders to corrupt, the negotiations became too complicated for the government. The piquetero movement was unfathomable to them.

The methods of the piqueteros announce a major event in history. We define event as: that which emerges in the present without owing anything to the past; something that is not deduced from the imperative rules of the system; something that breaks everything previous and inaugurates the new.

The previous forms of struggle were run by the logic of representation. The unions, the political parties, and the armed organizations were and are hierarchical organizations with well-known leaders. They are forms of organization similar to that of the state. The struggles of the 1960s and '70s are emblematic in this sense, and the heroic guerrilla commanders are examples of this manner of understanding politics. The state knows how to confront this logic. Instead, direct democracy is not easily assimilated to the forms of state and poses new problems. Along with the Berlin wall, a way of understanding politics also fell and the emergence of the Zapatismo in Mexico announces something different. The Zapatista event inaugurates a new world: "We fight for a new time of life."

The piquetero experience

Just as the Mothers of the Plaza de Mayo invented a new form of being heard with their marches and claims, the unemployed had to alter the normalcy of a situation that ignored them by blocking roads, an expression that summarizes the wager of the piqueteros.

The piquetero experience reclaimed a good amount of union worker knowledge like the organization through assemblies, direct action, and the picket itself. But at the same time, it introduced a different way of inhabiting the neighborhood and addressing—in a collective manner—the basic forms of subsistence. It was necessary to be acquainted with the store owners of the neighborhood to obtain food and to know other neighbors to create clothes drives or to obtain materials for the construction of childcare centers. Different from other more specific militant experiences that deal with particular problems, the piquetero activism aims to transform the totality of the conditions of life.

Some of the organizations of unemployed workers (which are not the majority but which are growing) are loyal to the original experience; their organization is horizontal; they seek direct democracy and distribute in assembly the obtained subsidies. They are autonomous from the State, the political parties, and the unions. In many ways, their approach to doing things is novel and powerful. What is obtained from the State by means of "piquetes" (road blocks) is distributed via an assembly. Autonomy is inherent in each of their undertakings.

They hold education workshops where a good amount of their people educate themselves. They also hold productive workshops where they take into account problems of health and nutrition. From these come their best known successes. With the few resources that they obtain, they have set up a network of pharmacies, a bakery, and cement brick factory.

The *piquetero* activism aims to transform the totality of the conditions of life . . . their organization is horizontal . . . They are autonomous from the State, the political parties, and the unions.

The contrasts with the government initiatives are striking, and the example of the bread is symbolic in this sense. With all the resources of the richest municipality of the country, the government of Buenos Aires reduced the price of bread to 1,60 peso for a few days, which failed rapidly. Instead, the piqueteros of the Coordinadora "Anibal Verón", with their scant resources, distribute the bread at 1 peso per kilo.

This is a simple example of how direct democracy allows life to be organized in a more efficient way than the corrupt capitalist administration. The potential of this movement is far from exhausted and many are looking to the novelty of their actions. Of important note, most participants in this movement are extremely young and predominantly female.

The 19th and 20th of December, 2001

Argentina made the news all over the world. For the first time, a mobilization toppled an elected government. The intolerable situation for broad sections of the population drove thousands of Argentines out to loot grocery stores in search of food. The government's response to the lootings was to declare a state of siege that, among other things,

suspended democratic liberties such as the right to gather and demonstrate on the street. The largest demonstration occurred on the day when the State declared a state of siege. With absolute spontaneity, people went out into the streets without any notice and with a slogan that no one had heard before: "que se vayan todos, que no quede ni uno solo!" ("Out with them all, none should stay!").

There were signs that something might happen (though not in this manner). The politicians had been questioned greatly by a large portion of the population. During the parliamentary elections in October, the blank vote won throughout the whole country. This was an incident without precedent in any parliamentary democracy in the last few decades.

At midnight on the 19th, a crowd banging pots directed itself to the Plaza de Mayo (located in front of the house of government) to the shout of "everyone leave!" and remained singing until dawn. About 40,000 people remained shouting—not demanding anything specific but asking for everything. Once more, there were no leaders with whom to negotiate.

This was an insurrection without author; the incident became a fixture in Argentine life. The people were shaking off the terror instilled by the military dictatorship 25 years before. People did not go out for purely economic demands but with a directly political proposal and with an anti-state stance.

The only response that the State could articulate was a repression of absolutely peaceful demonstrations; in fact, the majority of the mobilization was made up of families with their children. At the height, there were about 40,000 people in the Plaza de Mayo plus a few thousand more about the whole city. The repression evolved into a pitched battle with the crowd trying to recapture the plaza time after time until the police withdrew at dawn. However, the confrontations continued the next day and did not cease until the president resigned. The day ended with 30 dead in the whole country. The murders were committed with the same methods of the military dictatorship.

The pots did not quiet down, and the ruling class and the media tried to decode the message. The cacerolazos (a form of protest where people take to the streets banging pots and pans, or cacerolas) continued for months, and meanwhile, four more presidents fell, without possibility of closing the crisis.

The popular assemblies

The movement of the cacerolazo had its epicenter in the Federal Capital and with a strong component of the middle class. With the passing of the months, the neighbors that protested on the streets started to meet in assemblies. The spirit of those assemblies can be summarized in manifestos like the following transcript from a bulletin of the Nuñez-Saavedra assembly:

What is your dream ?
Do you remember the 19th of December?
That night you said, "enough of thieves."
Yes, you shouted it. I heard you; we all heard you.
We also heard you when you said,
"I no longer want to be who I was.
I don't want them to decide anymore for me.
I don't believe in any political leaders anymore--
Nor in judges, nor in union leaders, nor in bankers
Nor big business men, nor policemen."
I felt so much pride to see you and me.
It's just that I did not expect so much of you, even less of me, you surprised me.

Because of that, because YOU pushed me, I am walking to find a way,

banging pots, thinking out loud in the assemblies, with my neighbors.

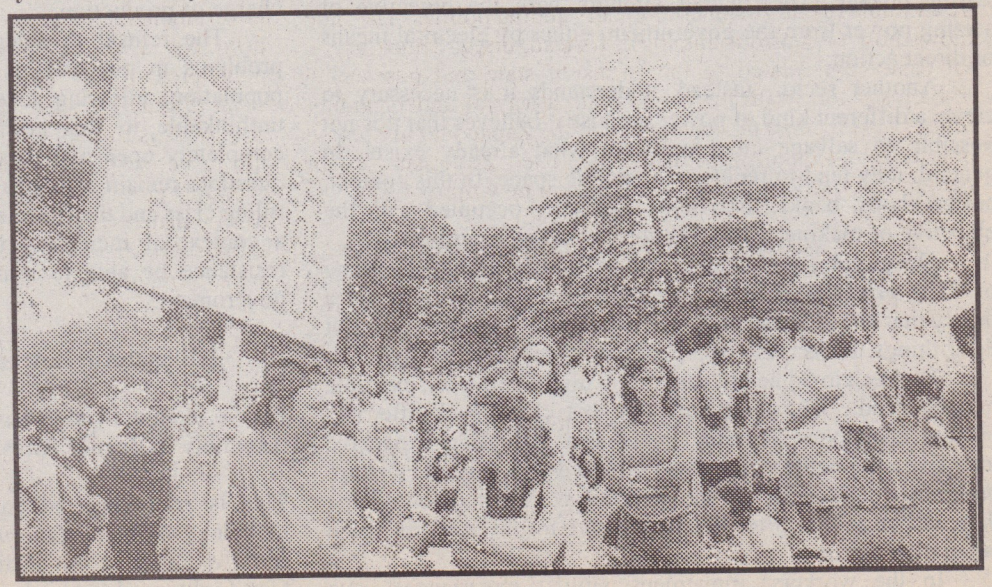
Where are we going? you ask

Well, we are trying to create with the neighbors a democratic and assembly-based system from which our representatives can come forth. The majority express a firm refusal of political parties; there is no space for them in the assemblies.

(North Cacerola (Northern Pot) Bulletin of the Nuñez-Saavedra popular assembly)

Assemblies grew like mushrooms in each neighborhood of the capital, and then, they extended into the suburbs. It is calculated that around 200 assemblies brought together an average of 200 participants in their moments of greatest participation. The shared viewpoint is the rejection of all politicians and the representation summed up in the slogan: "Out with them all!" The stage of deliberations gave way in

Photo: "Asamblea Arogue": the neighborhood councils converge in a city-wide assembly.



Assemblies grew like mushrooms in each neighborhood of the capital. The shared viewpoint is the rejection of all politicians and the representation summed up in the slogan:

Out with them all!

From Economic Meltdown to Grassroots Rebellion: an eyewitness account by John Jordan & Jennifer Whitney

—John Jordan is an artist, activist, and writer; he worked with London Reclaim the Streets (1995-2001) and has just given up the security of a teaching job to immerse himself in the popular rebellion in Argentina.

—Djenniffer Whitney is an activist, writer, and musician who spends much of her life traveling and attempting to ensure that the process of destroying capitalism is fun and creative. She works with the Black Cross Health Collective in Portland and drums with the Infernal Noise Brigade, a radical marching band based in Seattle.

The Tin Pot Insurrection

December the 19th was the turning point, the day when the Argentinean people said "enough!" The stage was set the day before, when people began looting shops and supermarkets, so they could feed their families. The president, Fernando De La Rua, panicked. De La Rua declared a state of emergency, suspending all constitutional rights, and banning meetings of more than three people. That was the last straw. Not only did it bring back traumatic memories of the seven year military dictatorship which killed over 30,000 people, but also it meant that the state was taking away the last shred of dignity from a hungry and desperate population - their freedom.

On the evening of December 19th, our friend Ezequiel was on the phone with his brother who lives on the other side of Buenos Aires. They were casually chatting, when his brother suddenly said, "Hang on, can you hear that noise?" Ezequiel strained to hear a kind of clanging sound coming through the receiver. "Yes, I can hear something on your side of the city but nothing here." They continued talking, and then Ezequiel paused, and said, "Wait, now I can hear something in my neighborhood, the same sound...." He ran to the window.

People stood on their balconies banging saucepans and came out onto the sidewalks banging pots; like a virulent virus of hope, the cacerolazo, which began as a response to the state of emergency, had infected the entire city. Before the president's televised announcement of the state of emergency was over, people were in the streets disobeying it. Over a million people took part in Buenos Aires alone, banging their pots and pans and demanding an end to neoliberal policies and corrupt governments. That night, the finance minister resigned, and over the next 24 hours of street protest, plainclothes policemen killed seven demonstrators in the city, while 15 more were killed in the provinces. The president resigned shortly thereafter and was evacuated from the presidential palace by helicopter.

Within a fortnight, four more governments fell. Argentina was now set on a major high-speed collision course, with the needs and desires of its people on one side, and the demands of the IMF, the inept government, and global capitalism on the other.

(Continued on next page)

Argentina's new forms of struggle (continued from the previous page)

time to the necessity to concretize tasks.

As in the piquetero movement, there are different political perspectives that coexist inside the movement of the popular assemblies. One sector of the assemblies is directed to put pressure on the government by means of marches and street demonstrations because it is understood that without the structure of the government, it won't be possible to achieve any lasting change. They gather strength with the objective of seizing power from the government, either by electoral means or direct action.

Another sector, instead, understands it is necessary to create a different kind of power because it believes that it is not possible to salvage anything from what already exists. In general, they tend to redefine the public space. In this context, coffee shops, banks, and fields are being occupied with the objective of making cultural centers or organic gardens.

The public space is redefined as non-governmental. None of these practices is very well theorized. There is not yet a theory that allows these practices to be unified, but this does not deter things. In fact, the occupation of spaces is growing..

The reclaimed health care clinic might be a good example of this trend. The neighbors got this clinic back after the owners abandoned it many years ago, including expensive intensive care equipment. Two hundred and fifty doctors are presently volunteering. In the next few weeks, neighbors hope they will be able to offer free health care for the workers of the taken over factories.

In the workers' movement, similar experiences have emerged. With the crisis, a lot of capitalists abandoned their factories, and these have been re-appropriated by the workers who self-manage as cooperatives. Approximately 80 factories are in this situation. Textiles, cooling systems, ceramics—these are some of the productive lines with workers' self-management. Lately, there have been congresses of workers and unemployed workers to discuss the best way of taking charge of production.

The refusal to delegate to others the solutions to the problems in our lives is spreading to more sectors of the population, allowing levels of self-management previously unthinkable in this corner of the world. The process is completely open and its end result appears uncertain. Some questions remain without answers. How long will the Argentine ruling class and the US tolerate these experiments, especially in a context of increasing instability in the region? Will the resistance be able to transform itself into an alternative to government?

—Bueno Aires, Argentina, July 2002

Paticio is an activist and writer with Nuñez-Saavedra Popular Assembly in Buenos Aires.

This is an excerpt of an article written for the upcoming anthology *Globalize Liberation: How to Uproot the System and Build a Better World* (Edited by David Solnit, published by City Lights, and out by June 2003)

The Neighborhoods Rise

Feb 15, 2002

Every Sunday there is an assembly of assemblies, an inter-neighborhood plenary in a park, attended by over 4000 people and often running for more than 4 hours. Spokespeople from rich, poor, and middle class districts attend to report back on the work and proposals of their local assemblies, share ideas, and debate strategy for the following week's citywide mobilizations.

The local assemblies are open to almost anyone, although one assembly has banned bankers and party activists, and others have banned the media. Some assemblies have as many as 200 people participating, others are much smaller. One of the assemblies we attended had about 40 people present, ranging from two mothers sitting on the sidewalk while breast feeding, to a lawyer in a suit, to a skinny hippie in batik flares, to an elderly taxi driver, to a dreadlocked bike messenger, to a nursing student. It was a whole slice of Argentinean society standing in a circle on a street corner under the orange glow of sodium lights, passing around a brand new megaphone and discussing how to take back control of their lives. Every now and then, a car would pass by and beep its horn in support, and this was all happening between 8pm and midnight on a Wednesday evening!

It all seemed so normal, and yet, was perhaps the most extraordinary radical political event I'd ever witnessed—ordinary people seriously discussing self-management, spontaneously understanding direct democracy and beginning to put it into practice in their own neighborhoods. Multiply this by 200 in this city alone, and you have the makings of an irresistible popular rebellion, a grassroots uprising which is rejecting centralized political power. As Roli, an accountant from the Almagro assembly said: "People reject the political parties. To get out of this crisis requires real politics. These meetings of common people on the street are the fundamental form of doing politics."

Photo: A woman attacks a bank in a regular demonstration in Buenos Aires.

A crowd beats the steel sheet metal that protects the entrance of a bank. They bang with hammers, ladles, monkey wrenches; one woman even removes her shoe to use as a tool. The entire facade of the building shudders

Popular Economics

Feb. 16, 2002

In the barter markets, another extraordinary example of necessity breeding ingenuity enables Argentineans to survive the crisis. We visit the Trueque La Estación (or The Station Exchange) that takes place twice a week in community center on the outskirts of the city. We are shown around by Ana, a shy engineer wearing thick glasses. "The politicians have stolen everything from the people, they want to control everybody," she explains. "People come here because they don't want to be in the system."

The place is bustling; we can hardly move through the jovial throngs of people perusing the rows of tables offering goods and services. You can buy anything here, or rather, you can exchange anything here, from eggs to bumper stickers, miniskirts to spices, cucumbers to crocheted toilet roll holders, as long as you use the barter's own currency—small brightly colored notes which look a bit like Monopoly money.

The system is simple: people take their products to the market and sell them for barter credit. The vendor is then able to use this to purchase products they need in return. If you have nothing to exchange and want to participate, you must buy credits from a bank with cash. But most people have something to trade, if they are imaginative enough, and though these people are deeply lacking in cash, they have a surplus of imagination.

Beware the Bourgeois Block

Feb. 18, 2002

It's noon on a Monday, and we are on Florida Avenue—the main pedestrian shopping street of Buenos Aires—no different from London's Oxford Street, with its numerous McDonald's, Tower Records and Benettons. But today something is not quite normal. The rustle of shopping bags is drowned out by a deafening racket.

A crowd of about 200 people are beating the steel sheet metal that protects the entrance of a bank. They bang with hammers, ladles, monkey wrenches; one woman even removes her shoe to use as a tool. The entire facade of the building shudders under the fury of the raining vibration of the blows. The force of some of the tools manages to punch gaping holes straight through the metal, agile gloved hands pries the sheets apart. Suddenly the armor falls away and the crowd cheers.

A handful of people split off and invade a bank lobby across the street. Within a fraction of a second, all six ATM machines are systematically smashed, shattered glass flies, and

a woman sprays the word "chorros" (crooks) in huge letters on the marble wall. Nervous bank employees watch the scene from behind a glass door; an egg sails through the air and breaks against it. The bankers flinch, then turn away.

The crowd repeats the accusatory chant "Ladrones, ladrones" (thieves) and then join in a longer chant, while jumping ecstatically up and down, waving portfolios and briefcases around. The longer chant translates loosely as "Whoever is not jumping is a banker, whoever is not jumping is a thief...." When this dies down, everyone casually exits the lobby and moves on to the next bank, less than fifty yards up the street.

It was impossible to tell the demonstrators from the passersby. Men in suits and ties with briefcases in one hand and hammers in the other, women with gold bracelets, hand bags, and high heels sharing cans of spray paint, anonymous suits on their lunch break joining the fracas and then melting back into the crowd.

The ahorristas are the upper to lower middle class who have had their life savings frozen by the government-imposed corralito. They are architects, computer programmers, doctors, housewives, accountants, and even bank employees, one of whom, dressed in a business suit and holding a wrench and a metal bowl, explained, "It's not just the banks who are thieves, it's the government with the corporations. They confiscated the money we had in the bank. They stole it." She pauses, and then shakes her fist. "I am very angry!"

In the capitalist system, they don't care about peoples health or nature, to them all that is interesting is to make money. We produce for the needs of our neighbors, we all need a little bit of each other, we need each other.

And yet the ahorristas are not simply the selfish petit bourgeoisie, worried only about their own money. Their struggle has broken out of the enclosure of self-interest, and has begun to encompass a critique of much of the social system. They have publicly allied themselves to the piqueteros and many take part in the assemblies . "A lot more than just the government must change here," says Carlos, a computer programmer, who has painted slogans all over his suit.

Part Two by John Jordan

Killing Piqueteros

July 2, 2002

The Piquetero movement has been growing across the country and despite a media campaign of criminalization and warnings from the president that the government was no longer going to tolerate any more road blocks, a large mobilization took place on the 26th of June cutting some major arteries into Buenos Aires. After dispersing the crowd with teargas, rubber and real bullets, the police hunted piqueteros throughout the city, often firing from the back of cruising pick up trucks.

What followed was the cold-blooded murder of two organizers, Darrio Santillán and Maximiliano Costequi, both in their early twenties and both from the most radical piquetero network. Darrio was shot in the back at close range while he was helping Maxi who had been shot in the chest. By the end of the day, 160 people had been arrested and over a hundred injured, but it failed to break the movement and the response from every part of the popular rebellion was incredible. Thirty thousand took to the streets in support of the piqueteros, and within days the president went on TV to apologize. The head of the secret service, the minister of justice, and the chief of Buenos Aires Police were forced to resign and the police officers involved in the operation were put in jail.

Beneath the Masks

July 17, 2002

The bus drops us beside a dirt track which is dotted with perilous potholes filled with rubbish. We have arrived in Admiralte Brown, a huge sprawling neighborhood somewhere beyond the southern edges of Buenos Aires. This is a stronghold of one of the most radical groups of Piqueteros, part of the Annibal Veron network that was targeted on the 26th of June when Dario and Maxi were murdered. This network is itself part of the larger Movimento Trabajero Desocupado (MTD - Movement of Unemployed Workers).

A small, hand-painted sign marks the entrance to the MTD bakery. We pick our way through a pile of bicycles parked in the passageway which leads to a courtyard where about twenty people are sitting in a circle taking part in a workshop. Most are in their early twenties—some a lot younger, a few a lot older. Despite the occasional barking dogs, the gusts of wind, crowing cocks, and small children running between the chairs, the participants seem intensely focused as Lola, the energetic young piquetero facilitator, hands out strips of paper. Stuck on the rough concrete wall in front of them is a large sheet of flip-chart paper divided into two columns, the left labeled: "MTD", the right one: "CAPITALIST SYSTEM OF PRODUCTION".

The workshop is about to begin.

"What's the difference between a bakery here and a bakery in the capitalist system?" asks Lola. "Who are we producing for here?"

"We produce for our neighbors," pipes up Yvette, a grey-haired woman in her fifties, her brown face furrowed like a deeply ploughed field, "and to teach ourselves to do new things, to learn to produce for ourselves".

"For whom do the bakers work in a capitalist system?" Lola continues.

"For the managers, for a corporation," replies Maria, who sports a silver ring in her nose.

"The people working in bakeries are people like us," says Astor, "but they have to work long hours, often up to 3am in the morning when the dough goes in the ovens, they work their bodies to the bone."

Miguel, slouched in the corner and wearing an Iron Maiden sweat shirt, butts in: "And yet the people who work hardest get the least reward; they work in subhuman conditions, earn nothing, and continue to work. But we produce so that everyone can live better." For a moment the group falls into contemplative silence.

Each strip of paper that Lola handed out has a statement written on it about either the self-organized collective "MTD" form of production or capitalist forms of production. The idea is they attach their strip of paper on the appropriate column of the flip chart and explain why they think it should go there.

A glum looking guy with long shaggy hair in a polyester black and red Nike tracksuit stands up first. He reads out his strip of paper. "The most important aim is to make profits." He shakes his head.

"In the capitalist system, they don't care about peoples' health or nature, to them all that is interesting is to make money. We produce for the needs of our neighbors, we all need a little bit of each other, we need each other."

Yvette is next. "Only one person makes decisions." She slaps the strip onto the "capitalist" column. "We decide things together here, and the money we make we share between all of us..."

One by one they all take turns, standing up, eloquently explaining the ways the different systems are organized and discussing each point at length.

"Do these principles we have been talking about really happen in the MTD?" asks Lola, provocatively. Her extraordinary facilitation had meant everyone in the group has contributed to the debates.

"When we work together there are always some problems, not everyone is used to common work." says Yvette.

"We are so used to a capitalist work system," exclaims Maria.

The murders and mass arrests of the 26th changed a lot for the Annibal Verron network: A big debate is taking place about the role of masking up during actions, and it seems a decision has been made to stop wearing masks for the time being.

The challenge is to present the movement as unemployed workers, first, piqueteros, second. The piquete is just a tactic—though an amazingly successful one. They block the roads, demand a specific number of 'plan trabajor', the unemployed subsidies, and more often than not get them from the local government—about 40 pounds a month per person. They have also used the tactic to back various demands, including getting food from supermarkets.

But it's the constructive aspects of the movement which they want to show to the world: the self-organization, the direct democracy and the numerous neighborhood projects, the bakery, the ropero and so on. As in many protest movements it is these constructive elements which are so difficult to make visible. The powerful current in our culture which obscures constructive, creative situations with the spectacle of conflict and confrontation runs deep.

Photo: Preparing the *piquetero* barricade that usually includes burning tires . . .

GLOBAL DAYS OF SOCIAL DISOBEDIENCE FOR ARGENTINA TO CELEBRATE CREATIVE ALTERNATIVES TO THE DICTATORSHIP OF THE MARKETS.

Groups in Argentina and across the globe are calling for global days of Action to demonstrate that those who are building alternatives to the dictatorship of the markets are not alone. On the 20th of December, a day when tens of thousands will take to the streets of Argentina to celebrate the first anniversary of last years' uprising, actions and events will take place across the world in solidarity with the people of Argentina.

The day will demonstrate that the movement of movements against capitalism can move beyond insurrection towards a real social revolution. A social revolution, made of thousands of revolutions, where people are beginning to build the life that they want and preparing to defend it rather than simply protesting against what they don't want. And that Argentina is an inspiring model of this. What can you do on the day? Here are some ideas ...Take pots and pans into the streets to celebrate the sound of the Cacerolazo, start up a local neighbourhood assembly, visit your local banks who have branches in Argentina, blockade roads in solidarity with the *piqueteros*, occupy your work place or college and try out self management, subvert the spirit of consumer Christmas by creating a barter market ....the options are endless...

December 20 & 21, 2002

Postscript for the anticapitalist movement

Argentina may well prove to be the crisis which irrevocably splits the ever-widening crack in the neoliberal armor, especially if things continue to unravel in other parts of Latin America. Recent events in Venezuela, and the possibility of left wing gains in this year's Brazilian presidential elections, point to a shift away from the "Washington Consensus" across much of the region.

The last decade has seen the increasing delegitimazation of the neoliberal model, as a movement of movements has sprung up on every continent, challenging the seemingly unstoppable expansion of capital. From Chiapas to Genoa, Seattle to Porto Alegre, Bangalore to Soweto, people have occupied the streets, taken direct action, practiced models of self-organization, and celebrated a radical spirit of autonomy, diversity, and interdependence. The movements seemed unstoppable, as mass mobilizations got bigger, more diverse populations converged, and the World Bank, WTO, IMF, and G8 were forced to meet on mountain tops, protected by repressive regimes, or behind fences defended by thousands of riot police. Seeing them on the defensive, having to justify their existence, gave the movements an extraordinary sense of hope.

By identifying the underlying global problem as capitalism, and by developing extraordinary international networks of inspiration in very short amounts of time, it felt almost as though history were speeding up, that perhaps we could succeed in the next phase, the process of imagining and constructing worlds which exist beyond greed and competition. Then, history did what it does best, surprising us all on September 11th when the twin towers were brought down, and it seemed for a while that everything had changed.

Suddenly hope was replaced by the politics of despair and fear. Demonstrations were called off, funding was pulled, and mass backpedaling and distancing occurred within the movement itself. Commentators immediately declared anticapitalism dead.

September the 11th forced a reappraisal among activists, particularly in the global North. It challenged us all to take a deep breath, put our rhetoric into practice, and think strategically, and fast. Then three months later, history seemed to resume its accelerated speed, when Argentina erupted, followed closely by the collapse of Enron. It seemed that despite the blindly nationalist, racist, and indefinite "war on terror" to distract the world, neoliberalism was continuing to disintegrate.

Perhaps the biggest challenge the global movements face now is to realize that the first round is over, and that the slogan first sprayed on a building in Seattle and last seen on a burning police van in Genoa, "We Are Winning," may actually be true. The "crisis of legitimacy" expands exponentially almost daily. Corporations and institutions such as the World Bank and the G8 are constantly trying to appease the growing global uprising, with empty promises of environmental sustainability and poverty reduction.

With mainstream commentators falling over themselves to declare that capitalism is good for us and will save the world, it seems clear that the first round of this movement has been a victory. There has been a "...nearly complete collapse of the prevailing economic theory," according to economist James K. Galbraith. But the next round will be the hardest. It will involve applying our critiques and principles to our everyday lives; it will be a stage of working close to home. A stage where mass conflict on the streets is balanced (but not entirely replaced) with creating alternatives to capitalism in our neighborhoods, our towns and cities, our bioregions. This is exactly where Argentina can show us an inspiring way to move forward.

The situation in Argentina contains many elements of the anticapitalist movements: the practice of direct action, self-management and direct democracy; the belief in the power of diversity, decentralization, and solidarity; the convergence of radically different social sectors; the rejection of the state, multinational corporations, and financial institutions. Yet, what is most incredible is that the form of the uprising arose spontaneously, it was not imposed or suggested by activists, but rather, created by ordinary people from the ground up, resulting in a truly popular rebellion that is taking place every day, every week, and including every sort of person imaginable.

Argentina has become a living laboratory of struggle, a place where the popular politics of the future are being invented. In the face of poverty and economic meltdown, people have found enough hope to continue resisting, and have mustered sufficient creativity to begin building alternatives to the despair of capitalism. The global movements can learn much in this laboratory. In many ways it is comparable with the social revolutions of Spain in 1936, of France in May 1968, and more recently, in southern Mexico, with the 1994 uprising of the Zapatista Army of National Liberation (EZLN)—all rebellions which inspired, then and now, millions around the world.

We need to be prepared, not only to resist, but to find ways to rebuild our societies when the economic crisis hits. If the popular rebellion in Argentina succeeds, it could show the world that people are able to live through severe economic crisis and come out the other side, not merely having survived, but stronger, and happier for struggling for new ways of living.

the complete text of John & Djennifer's work on Argentina is online at
www.nadir.org/nadir/initiativ/agp/free/imf/argentina/txt/2002/0918que_se_vayan.htm

Introduction

From September 10-15, the Cascadia Media Alliance hosted a Reclaim The Media Convergence in Seattle. Held during the week of the annual convention of the National Association of Broadcasters (NAB), this occasion was an opportunity to protest the corporate-driven policies of the NAB/FCC/NPR triumvirate, as well as to gather for our own grassroots shadow convention. Community media activists from all over North America descended upon Seattle to hear speakers, do workshops, strategize and bounce off each others' creative energy. By the end of the convergence 10 free radio stations had been set up just 2 band widths apart on the FM dial in open defiance of the censorious 3 bandwidth low power fm requirement of the FCC. This rule has in effect created a situation in which LPFM stations are not legally feasible in urban areas like Seattle. The eclectic programming mix of these pirate stations featured everything from guerilla radio broadcasts of the FCC actually battering down the doors of Free Radio Austin, to a satirical piece about Clear Channel by Mark Hosler of Negativland, to a series of 3 minute airplay spots on the subject of "media and democracy." I was invited to kick off the week's events with a presentation at the Seattle IMC. Focusing on the affinities between anarchism and surrealism in relation to media activism. My talk, upon which the following article is based, consciously avoided the self-congratulatory approach of keynote speakers David Barsamian and Amy Goodman, and instead sought to raise thorny strategic questions for anarchists involved in the media democracy movement.

Tuning in to the Media Dreamscape

By Ron Sakolsky

As anarchists, we must ask ourselves whether our goal is to achieve the institutionalization of our radical demands vis- a-vis radio in particular and media in general OR alternatively to demand the radical transformation of that which has been appropriated and institutionalized.

In answering this question, we can start by addressing the title of this convergence, *Reclaim The Media*. In one sense, this title is a misnomer. While there have been some distinct turning points in early radio history where things could have gone in a more populist direction, when it comes to radio in particular and broadcast media in general, we are really not reclaiming what was once ours in any simplistic sense.

Rather, we are seizing or taking back what has been stolen from us before the NAB or Clear Channel ever existed. In the case of television, this theft was structured into the system right from the start. There was no golden age in which we controlled the broadcast media, so strategically we cannot reclaim what we never had.

However, since the channels of communication have increasingly been strip-mined and clear cut and the mediascape brutally mauled in recent years, we can fruitfully recall a history of struggle: of opportunities lost, inspiring moments of resistance, culture jamming breakthroughs, and underground wellsprings of oppositional media that have surfaced, and some of which have survived and flourished, over the years.

Aside from these episodes in radical history, what we are reclaiming is our very ability to imagine a broadcast media that satisfies our deepest desires.

Surrealist Don La Coss has illuminated the affinities between radio and the imagination in his "Attenae of Magnetic Midnights: Surrealist Guerrilla Radio" piece which was circulated as part of a zine designed for the Reclaim The Media gathering:

"When you fall into sleep, your consciousness concludes its broadcasting day and signs off of the air. At that point, transmissions normally not heard during waking hours become noticeable; as you slumber, your mind scans these distant transmissions from the unconscious, occasionally tuning one in clearly enough to become a dream. At its deepest core, the human psyche radiates a vast, natural reservoir of instinct, spontaneity, cooperation, creativity, love, and open sexual response that communicates most clearly when the static buzz of everyday living is shut down for any length of time. Uncensored and unpredictable, these broadcasts that blast from the unconscious may not always be pretty or pleasant, but like the direct speech of Radio Alice and the passionate truths of Radio Libertaire, they are honest, open, and free from outside interference and distortion. Upon awakening, your conscious mind resumes broadcasting again and jams those unconscious transmissions with the 60-cycle hum of daily activity. Though mostly inaudible, the illegal broadcasts of the unconscious continue without pause, biding time until the conscious mind is turned off again, as it inevitably will."

Given this insight, it seems to me that at its most imaginative our radio activism would be tuned into these dream broadcasts rather than built upon the nostalgic myth of once having been in the driver's seat in relation to broadcast media.

Thriving on dreams of revolt, surrealism has been a part of the radical political imagination since the Twenties, though even many radicals do not recognize the role of imagination as pivotal to social transformation and even dismiss its value by contemptuously labeling it as "unrealistic."

Given the depth of what surrealists demand—the transformation of reality itself—their strategies tend to be, like those of anarchists, revolutionary rather than reformist. Surrealism is

not populist, and its demand for an end to the artificial dichotomy between dream and reality cannot be subsumed in the rhetoric of social democracy or recuperated in the bureaucratic language of corporations or regulatory agencies.

As surrealist Penelope Rosemont has summed it up, "Surrealism is what happens when poetry and life dare to be one and the same." Like anarchists, surrealists demand the impossible, pushing beyond the already existing boundaries of the possible into the uncharted terrain of the Marvelous. Instead of confining themselves to the pragmatic politics of the possible, which are rooted in a miserablist acceptance of so-called "realistic" limitations, surrealists seek to create fault lines in our consciousness about what might indeed be "possible" in a world of unfettered imagination.

Formulating a Radical Media Politics

How then might a radical media politics that recognizes the worth of both surrealism and anarchism be formulated? Instead of expanding upon a foundation of populism, we would be seeking out those elements of refusal which connect with both anarchism and surrealism, building upon them, and seeking insights that might inspire us in exciting new directions while simultaneously raising the stakes of what is desirable.

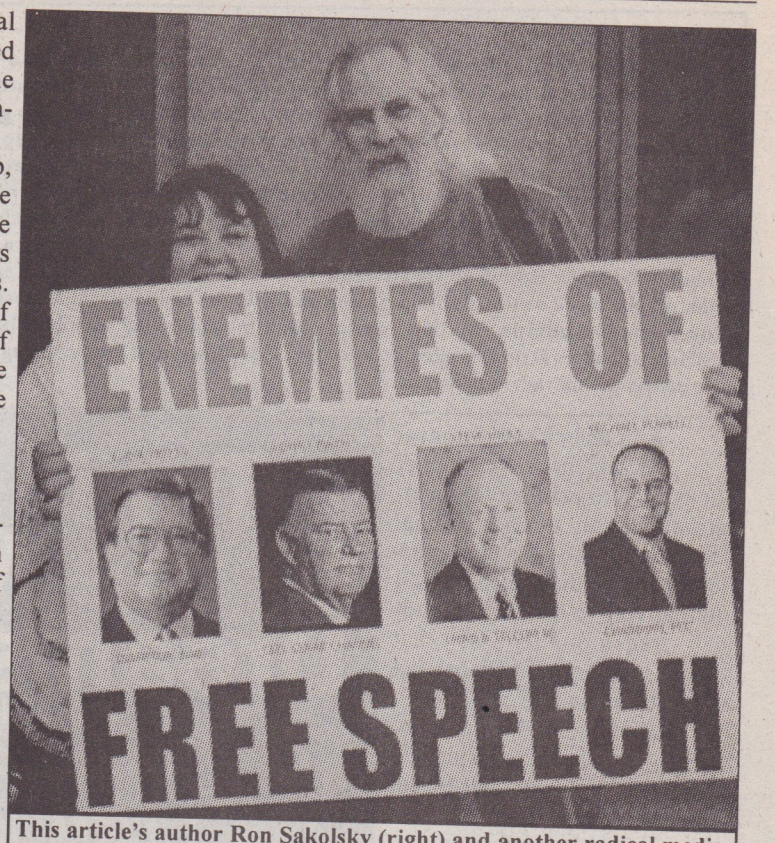
Unlike that other reclamation movement, Reclaim The Streets, there has never been a living historical practice rooted in "the commons" for us to call upon as justification for our demands in relation to the broadcast industry. So instead, media activists often use the word democracy.

However, democracy is a very problematic term. In the US, it has been associated with "the public interest" in the case of regulatory agencies such as the FCC, but the bureaucratic concept of "the public interest" differs markedly from that of "the commons." Aside from the tangibility of a concept literally rooted in the earth, "the commons" implies collective ownership in a way that "the public interest" does not.

Instead of the direct democracy of "the commons" concept, we get the indirect democracy of the FCC's stewardship of the airwaves. While they claim to act in our best interests, in reality the agency has been captured by the very corporate interests it supposedly exists to regulate on the public's behalf. However, though historically an inaccurate metaphor for the airwaves, I believe that we can *poetically* use the metaphor of "the commons" to spark our resistance to what is increasingly being seen as a new form of enclosure not on the land but in relation to the airwaves that surround it

At the tail end of the last century, I sought to address the increasing territorialization of the airwaves and enclosure of radio in *Seizing The Airwaves* as a touchstone for envisioning an oppositional free radio movement engaged in squatting the airwaves through the direct action strategy of radio piracy. Since then, in his new book, *Tearing Down the Streets: Adventures in Urban Anarchy*, Jeff Ferrell engagingly places the free radio movement within the context of the "commons" by examining such other challenges to restrictions on access to public space as Reclaim The Streets parties, Critical Mass rides, graffiti writing, busking, skateboarding and other oppositional forms of DIY cultural resistance.

As he puts it, "Pirate radio operators and street musicians would remind us that the streets exist not just as physical space, but as a contested ether of sonic space and communication, and would therefore point to the role of local governments and the FCC in closing down the city's lively cacophony."



This article's author Ron Sakolsky (right) and another radical media activist protest corporate broadcasters, September 2002.
Photo by Brad.

Let's take Ferrell's skateboarding example as a jumping off point to illustrate that public space in urban areas is increasingly seen as contested terrain. I just recently moved from Springfield, Illinois to British Columbia, and for the last few years before I left Springfield there was much public debate on creating an officially planned municipal skate park. Like many places in the US, in Springfield, if you're conservative you're considered normal, if you're liberal you're considered radical and if you're radical, you're considered crazy. Well, I had the crazy idea that creating a skate park was not the right strategy for radicals. I see skate parks as essentially a form of containment rather than a means of liberating the streets and public space from the yoke of policed corporate culture. Yet, faced with a hostile environment where conservatives routinely attacked skaters as degenerate scum, and cops arrested kids on the flimsiest of pretexts for invading the sacred downtown space reserved for Lincoln tourists, state government bureaucrats and their cohorts in Springfield's state legislature; both liberals and radicals (even including a few that identified their politics as anarchist) argued for the legalization of skating via skate parks.

In so doing, they accepted the circumscribed conditions that established these parks as a sanitized replacement for (rather than an addition to) free access to city streets. As if to confirm my worst fears, once I arrived in my new home in BC, I heard that the nearby city of Courtenay was justifying its

threat to increase the repression of downtown skaters by reference to skatepark availability. The city was claiming that since it had a skatepark where the activity was permissible (albeit for a fee), kids who had the temerity to do their skating on the downtown streets should be harassed and fined.

This approach immediately struck a nerve in me in terms of my Springfield experience, and the more I thought about it I began to smell the stench of the "protest pens" that have become a regular fixture of Democratic and Republican political party conventions in the States where the aim is not to facilitate protest but to control it. In opposition to such urban "cleansing" strategies, not only is my argument against skateparks in keeping with Ferrell's, but with a piece called "Against The Legalization of Occupied Space," which is a Venomous Butterfly pamphlet-length critique of the government-sanctioned Italian social center movement by two dissident Italian anarchists who go by the names of El Piso Occupato and Barrochio Occupato. They argue against a legalization strategy and in favor of increasing the number of illegally occupied squats and the growth of liberated social space in general as a more appropriately anarchist strategy. Such an approach in turn is consistent with what surrealists mean by "absolute divergence."

In this same sense, we must ask ourselves if our goal is institutionalization or deinstitutionalization?' This is in essence the question I raised in my widely circulated "LPFM Fiasco" article first published online in *Lip Magazine* last year. In relation to the great debate then raging around LPFM as a strategy, I argued in support of anarchist pirate radio stations within the micropower movement which preferred to keep their stations unlicensed in order to avoid the co-optation of the free radio idea. Their emphasis was on eluding both government and corporate control.

LPFM, on the other hand, is a populist rather than an anarchist strategy. As I saw it then and continue to see it now, Kennard, the FCC Commissioner who originated the LPFM program, was slyly offering us the carrot of licenses as a carefully laid trap to regain his agency's control of the airwaves at the height of the free radio movement's insurgent challenge to the licensing system through acts of civil disobedience and active resistance. His goal was the liberal one of enclosing the micropower radio movement within the bureaucratic guidelines of government regulation while continuing to expand upon his use of the stick to crack down on illegal stations.

Not coincidentally, his enticements to normalization through legalization were cleverly designed to divide the movement. Consequently, I am not contending that LPFM advocates and unsanctioned radio pirates can't work together to "fight the power" in certain ways, and the Reclaim the Media convergence did offer us opportunities to strategize together. Similarly, we must avoid being turned against one another. The FCC would like nothing better than to play "divide and conquer" within the micropower radio movement. Nor do I want to play the tired game of "more anarchist than thou."

All I want to do at this juncture is to clarify differences within the movement in relation to our long and short term goals, whether explicit or implicit, examine the strategies that diverse types of activists choose to achieve them, and figure out ways in which we can engage with one another in creating a strategy that is mutually reinforcing rather than unnecessarily divisive.

Now, of course, with Powell as the conservative chair of the FCC, even the containment-oriented LPFM program is in jeopardy, much to the delight of the NAB and NPR lobbyists whose efforts against it have paid off so handsomely.

Recognizing the above dynamics, what's an anarchist to do? Some anarchists prefer not to involve themselves in reformist struggles, while others do so cautiously and always keep in mind that mere legalization can never be the final goal. Such struggles are most valuable from an anarchist perspective if a grassroots movement can use them as a launching pad for making ever more radical demands rather than giving in to the desperate compromises of the bureaucratic survival game, of just a few more crumbs from the master's banquet table please.

Returning now to the similarities between radio piracy and the squatter movement, currently, in Vancouver and

Ron Sakolsky's guerilla radio statement, broadcast September 2002

"This is Ron Sakolsky and I'd like to tell you something about media and democracy.

As an anarchist, my affinity with democracy is not about voting for someone to better represent us, but rather taking action to directly represent ourselves. Just as I don't consent to being ruled by some politician, no matter how Green, Left or Libertarian; I don't trust some professional media talking head to frame my reality for me. My conception of how media and democracy are related involves a radical critique of both.

I know a surrealist poet named Jayne Cortez, who says in one of her poems: 'Find Your own voice & use it
Use your own voice & find it.'

So if we are to take the science that Jayne is droppin' on us seriously, we've got to lift our collective voices against injustice and on behalf of our dreams for a world of freedom. And when we do this together, we are each stronger for it because we find our own voices in the process of passionately using them in our own chosen ways to resist oppression and to insist on liberation.

Now when we compare this radical vision of democracy to the miserabilism of our currently mediated lives, we must inevitably confront the gap between the fatally compromised illusions that comprise what is called political reality and our own brightly burning desires for personal and social autonomy and an end to hierarchy and domination.

It is then that we begin to question our socially assigned roles as passive citizen/spectators, and to demand control over the means of cultural production, representation and distribution which today are largely the domain of the corporate and public media giants.

In so doing, we emerge from the velvet prison of consumerism and market demographics and become alive to revolutionary possibilities outside the one world of global capitalism. As we awaken from our media-induced trance, we unleash the insurgent power of the creative imagination, shake off the shackles of the reality police, and break the silence of cynicism and despair.

'Find your own voice & use it.
Use your own voice & find it.'
For the Cascadia Media Alliance, this is Ron Sakolsky."

Victoria, BC, there are housing struggles going on over the issue of "social housing." As these cities increasingly are subjected to gentrification, the issue of access to affordable housing is as much of a life or death matter as access to health care. In recent months, vacant buildings which had been designated as future social housing sites have been squatted when the new right-wing government refused to deliver on earlier promises to provide housing there. Yet, while occupying a building, and then returning to occupy the street in front of the building when evicted by the cops, are unquestionably militant tactics, they do not necessarily have anarchist consequences. For this reason, some anarchists among the squatters have been pushing for keeping these squats autonomous rather than seeing their efforts coopted by government in the form of bureaucratically administered public housing.

We must continue to be about creating galvanizing imagery and making artistic statements that break people out of their consumer trance and move them into action.

In our protests we must ask ourselves, as anarchists, 'How do we create a situation in which the public belief in government solutions to political problems is undermined rather than ending up reinforcing the popular attitude that if only we had a more responsive government everything would be OK?' And as a surrealist question we might add, 'How do we go beyond mere realism in both our tactics and our overall strategic demands?'

These questions, of course, were important ones to address at our Reclaim The Media events in Seattle. Rather than creating the illusion of a once upon a time broadcast media democracy, in my opinion, we should be calling for nothing less than a radical break with the trajectory of broadcast media development ever since the early days of its existence at the beginning of the twentieth century.

For me, the need for such a radical break cannot be automatically derived from a populist slogan like "media democracy" without some further explanation. For one thing, we must continue to be about creating galvanizing imagery and making artistic statements that break people out of their consumer trance and move them into action. Surrealist Franklin Rosemont put it nicely when describing the Bread and Puppet Theatre back in 1989, as if in anticipation of the widespread use of puppets in street demonstrations that was to come in the global justice movement of the following decade:

"Peter Schumann and his friends have sounded the tocsin for a resurgence of the best kind of magical utopianism: reveries of a wildly desirable yet fully realizable world beyond the paralyzing dichotomies that enforce a system of exploitation and horror...Here the crisis of consciousness meets the vengeance of dreams head-on in the dazzling promise of a new day. Marvelously subversive, subversively marvelous, these puppets inspire a life larger than life, a jump for joy beyond all misery, a future worth its weight in light."

With this in mind, we must always remember to include tactics that rupture mass mediated consensus reality by freely making use of the surrealist arsenal of mad love, poetic revolt, black humor and creative sabotage to festively lift the veil on the NAB's corporate face by debunking their claims that they are only giving the people what they want, that in fact they are operating in what they call the public interest.

Hey, they do audience-marketing studies, you know, and the "diverse" consumer demographics of focus groups determine the mindshare strategies which drive programming content. Isn't this democracy? Why, it's even multicultural. Therefore, along with all the Reclaim The Media emphasis on making the corporate media more accountable should be an emphasis on the other self-determination slogan popular among radical media activists: "Become The Media-DIY".

So where does surrealism intersect with activism in a way that is compatible with anarchism? According to African American historian, cultural critic and author of *Race Rebels*, Robin DG Kelley, in a talk he gave to University of North Carolina students in September of 1998, and later expanded upon for his new book, *Freedom Dreams: The Black Radical Imagination:*

"Above all, surrealism considers love and poetry and the imagination as powerful social and revolutionary forces, not as a replacement for organized protest, for marches and sit-ins, for strikes and slowdowns, for matches and spraypaint. George Clinton used to say that we need to 'dance our way out of our constrictions.' He was being funny but dead serious. Whether we call it dancing, or dreaming, or making poetry, we need to recognize that the hardest work we have before us is breaking the chains of imaginative slavery. If we want a new society, we have no choice but to supersede the dominant reality—to imagine a different relationship not only to the economy, but also to time, to work, to the natural world, to each other."

Superseding reality

By superseding existing reality, we must break with the current injunction to 'keep it real.' Of course in contemporary Hip Hop lingo the power of 'keepin' it real' means many things: it is a challenge to commercialism, a recognition of the 'ghetto' as a site of creativity, a call for solidarity with oppressed classes. But if we believe in revolution, we need to move *beyond* the real and to make it *surreal."*

To quote Lautreaumont, "Poetry must be made by all." Yet, surrealists are not talking about having more trendy poetry slams, but about creating a world in which people's lives can be made more poetic, where poetry is something that you live rather than something you just read or even write. Since this emphasis on the poetry of everyday life can be an appealing vision to both anarchists and surrealists, those who find themselves at home in both milieus might consider how our media activism strategies reflect that affinity in the process of fanning the insurrectionary flames which will light the path to marvelous freedom.

—Denman Island, BC, Fall 2002

All quotes are from the book *Surrealist Subversions: Rants, Writings and Images by the Surrealist Movement in the United States* (Sakolsky, ed., Autonomedia, 2002) except for those of Don La Coss and Jeff Ferrell as noted above.

"For those who would see directly into essential nature, the idea of the sacred is a delusion & abstraction: it diverts us from seeing what is before our eyes: plain thusness. No hierarchy, no equality. No occult & exoteric, no gifted kids & slow achievers. No wild & tame, no bound & free, no natural & artificial. Each totally its own frail self. Even though connected all which ways; even because connected all which ways. This, thusness, is the nature of the nature of nature. The wild in wild." —Gary Snyder

Anarchy & the Spirit:

an introduction by Sunfrog

To those critics who claim the Fifth Estate is the new official journal of lifestyle activism, an issue with its central section devoted entirely to spirituality should prove their thesis. First hippie pacifism, now religion. Body-piercing, fire-breathing, and crystal-gazing coming soon.

But yes: even and especially in the theocratic United States of John Ashcroft, Franklin Graham, and Jerry Falwell, we wage rhetoric to challenge their jealous god! Give us an altered state of consciousness over an unaltered state of complacency any day.

Seriously though, anarchists are naturally suspicious of religion and the hierarchical hypocrisy its obedience to Church and God dictates. Wary of any institutionalized thinking that amplifies guilt, orchestrates denial, maximizes masochism, or capitalizes on discontent, many reject strict Judeo-Christian doctrine, dismiss murky New Age mush, and eschew angry atheist cynicism.

Politically, religion deserves the death of so many authoritarian systems. Theologically, it fails because it assumes that the source of inner contentment comes from an outward source: the not-there, un-earthy, anti-physical heavenly patriarch known as God. Assigning supreme goodness to a mythic force beyond our control and perceivable reality denies the undeniable divinity of life itself. Assuming that spirit is "not of this world" renounces the inextricably spiritual aspects of everything earthy and organic.

Yet the fascination with spirit remains: not attempting to sate a deep emotional hunger with paltry intellectual rationalizations and embracing hope, danger, adventure, mystery, and joy. Never consider the soul yet another space contained and contaminated by the imperial conquerors. Never consider a living death.

An anarchic spirituality is very much "of this world" but not of this society, this system of hierarchy and hatred, debt and domination, money and military. The path of the anarchist mystic includes the destruction of the structures that deny multidimensional spiritual and physical depth. Fundamentally critical of all fundamentalisms, remember: the anti-spiritual argument often extends from the same family of dreary, dualistic thinking that makes religion problematic in the first place.

Rejecting dogma does not require discarding a free spirituality. Examining anarchist spirituality demands dismissing assumptions about what that notion might mean. The anarchist spirit is the fire within our bellies that compels us to fight for peace and the planet, justice and freedom, even in these darkest of times.

The time has come to amplify an anti-traditional anarchist mysticism, no matter what the holier-than-me critics of the holy have to say. New modes of ecstatic experience have nothing to do with religion; even the "old religions" of paganism from which some draw inspiration were not really religions in the sense that civilized people understand the term. Religion comes from the tongue of bureaucracy—let us tap an urge that precedes bureaucracy. Just as religion is built with the bricks of guilt, we breathe the flesh of innocence. Not in original sin but in original ecstasy, a convulsively orgiastic goddess gives birth to the cosmos in multiple big bangs.

Pray not to pie-in-the-sky, not to priest, not to platitude, not to plastic, but practice pleasure, paying attention to the devilishly divine contours of our forests and oceans, our bodies and souls, our lives. Rather than fixate on the inner depravity of inhuman nature perpetuated by stagnant social roles, pursue an egalitarian Eden in the transformation of everyday experience.

To embrace this possibility with philosophical exploration, this section offers the beautiful collages of James Koehnline accompanying recent works by Max Cafard and Peter Lamborn Wilson along with a timeless interpretation of the topic by Gary Snyder. To round out the section, Lea Wood reviews Starhawk's latest book; Maxzine Weinstein critiques anarcho-paganism; and Don LaCoss discusses a recent attempt by corporations to attack ecologists as "fundamentalists."

—Novemeber 2002, Pumpkin Hollow

ANARCHAPTERS: ZHUANGZI'S CRAZY WISDOM & DA(O)DA(O) SPIRITUALITY

by Max Cafard

The following essay is a slightly abridged version of a longer work that will appear in Max Cafard's forthcoming book: **The Surregionalist Manifesto and other essays,** *to be published by Exquisite Corpse* **(and available through FE).**

"Wander where there is no trail. Hold on to all that you have received from Heaven, but do not think that you have gotten anything. Be empty, that is all."
—Zhuangzi

"Try to be empty and to fill your brain cells haphazardly. Go on destroying what you have in you. Indiscriminately. You could understand a lot of things, then." —Tristan Tzara

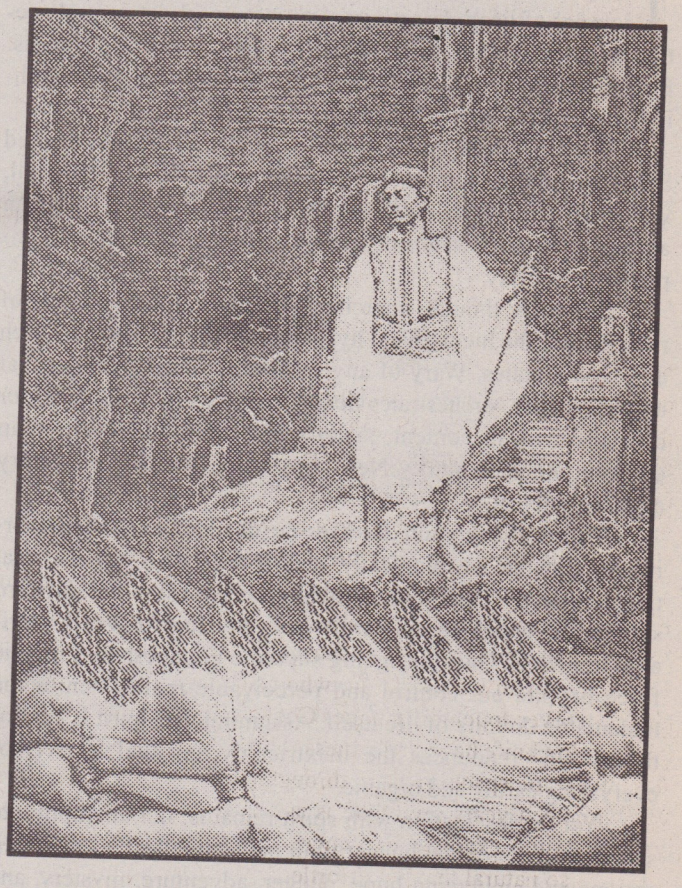
NO WAY

As Zen Master Wu-men takes us through the "Gateless Gate," the Daoist Sages Laozi and Zhuangzi **(many know these two philosophers by the former spellings, "Lao Tzu" and "Chuang Tzu")** take us along the Wayless Way, the Pathless Path. A contemporary pathless pathfinder tells us that "[t]here are paths that can be followed, and there is a path that cannot . . . it is the wilderness." The Pathless Path of Zhuangzi takes us into that wilderness, exploring the wildness of the world and wildness of the spirit. We find this path in the *Inner Chapters*, the sections of the ancient "Zhuangzi" writings that are thought to come from Zhuangzi himself (or selves). The Inner Chapters, we will discover, are the AnarChapters. They are chapters on wildness, freedom, spontaneity— in short, on Anarchy.

Those looking for "mysticism" in Zhuangzi may be disappointed — unless they're looking for the mysticism of discovering what's right before their eyes. Yes, in Zhuangzi you'll find strange, altered states of consciousness. Clarity of mind. Attentiveness to the things of the world. Vividness of imagination. Zhuangzi's mysticism is less about merging the Self into the Quietude of the One than about scattering selfhood into the Maelstrom of Multiplicity and watching, and taking part in, the Whirl of the Real.

Is this a form of Daoist "spirituality"? The term "spirituality" inevitably has undertones of the vaporous, the vapid, or even the vacuous. But if Zhuangzi is "spiritual," this means being a fully *embodied* spirit, while at the same time having *lightness of spirit* (as in French, *spirituel* means "witty"). What usually passes for "Nature Spirituality" or "Earth Spirituality" (check it out at your local book *chains*) is vastly more transcendentalist than Zhuangzi could ever be. It's usually fixated on an *Idea* of the Earth or Nature – almost inevitably a romanticized, sentimentalized, sanitized, or nostalgic Idea. Zhuangzi's spirituality has the smell of the Earth. It reeks of the Real and will no doubt offend those with excessively delicate aesthetic—and ontological—sensibilities. Watch out!

all collages by James Koehnline



You may be getting into deep Dada.

Yes, the radical spontaneity of Daoism links it to Dadaism. Daodao is Dada and vice versa. Tristan Tzara in fact said that Zhuangzi "was as dada as we are." Daoist spirituality is Dada spirituality. Zhuangzi's Daoism, like Dada, breaks down all the barriers, wanders off the path, and crosses all the boundaries. It takes us into wild, unchartered regions of nature, culture, and psyche. It's a surre(gion)al spirituality.

JUST DO IT— WITHOUT DOING IT

The AnarChapters are all about non-domination or an-archy. Daoists call this wuwei, doing without doing, doing without dominating. It's a concept that many know from its influence on Ch'an and Zen Buddhism. What's often called "Zen mind" has deep roots in Daoist wuwei. And so does Dada mind, as Tzara indirectly points out: "Dada isn't at all modern, it's rather a return to a quasi-buddhist religion of indifference." He might have said "it's a return to a Daoist spirituality of wuwei" since that's where we find the Pre-Ancientist origins of the spontaneity, non-egoism, non-duality and non-domination of experience that he has in mind when he says "indifference."

One of Zhuangzi's most intriguing tales is his anecdote of Prince Wen Hui's cook, Ding, who could carve an ox without his knife ever touching a bone. Cook Ding explains that "the blade of the knife has no thickness. That which has no thickness has plenty of space to pass through these spaces. Therefore after nineteen years my blade is as sharp as ever." This story gives a prime example of wuwei. The Cook Ding's skillful action is so natural that it's effortless, without striving, without resistance from an alien world that has to be dominated or forced into submission.

Cook Ding's knife can also be seen as the sharp blade of ruthless analytical and intuitive consciousness. Daoist mind grasps (without grasping) the moment of unity of all things, but also the particularity and "thusness" of all that appears. It can "cut through" things naturally without hacking them apart.

Finally, notice that the character in the story is a cook, someone who combines ingredients into a synthesis of creative expression, not a mere butcher who slices things into parts. The Daoist cook, rather than "murdering to dissect," dissects to make whole. Cooks are familiar figures in both Daoist and Zen stories, often showing lightening insight that turns learned monks and renowned scholars into bumbling fools. The cooks' skill expresses wuwei. Their art requires a sense of spontaneity and creativity. And they work in the realm par excellence in which spirituality and materiality converge: no wonder that the breaking of bread has been the center of both social and spiritual ritual.

"Discard wisdom!" says Laozi. "Get cooking!" says Zhuangzi. Don't be a do-nothing know-it-all. Just do it – without doing it.

In another of his stories, Zhuangzi writes of Liezi, who was renowned for possessing the skill of riding on the wind. The literal-minded may dismiss this claim as ancient superstition. But Zhuangzi was not referring to a literal feat that can now easily be surpassed by businessmen and tourists on 707's, but rather to an experience that even the most frequent flyers seldom have. This is the Daoist experience of being attuned to the way and knowing the effortlessness and ease of "doing without doing." Tzara also uses the wind as a symbol of Dadaist spontaneity. Dada, he says, "mingles its caprices with the chaotic wind of creation." So Liezi was a Master of this (non-) practice of wuwei. But the merciless dialectician Zhuangzi can't allow even the great Liezi to get away with anything. True, that sage "escaped the trouble of walking, but he still had to depend on something to get around." Instead, he should have "mounted on the truth of Heaven and Earth, ridden on the changes of the six breaths, and thus wandered through the boundless." Ultimately, we must depend on Nothing at All, or we will soon fall flat.

But Zhuangzi has more to say about that creative wind. He tells us that it blows through everything and makes "the music of heaven." It rushes through each thing, plays each thing like a musical instrument, so that each thing makes its own unique sound, and sings its own song. He asks us whether we can hear this Music of All Beings, in all its harmonic and discordant multiplicity.

What's most astounding is that this Music of Heaven plays all around each of us and even in and through us! "Joy and anger, sorrow and happiness, hope and fear, indecision and strength, humility and willfulness, enthusiasm and insolence, like music sounding from an empty reed or mushrooms rising from the warm dark earth, continually appear before us day and night. No one knows from whence they come. Don't worry about them. Let them be!" Who ever decides, "Now I'll be angry," or "Now I'll be joyful"? And even if soemone did, would that person first have decided, "Now I'll decide to be angry," or "Now I'll decide to be joyful"? No, the wind merely blows through our reed and the reeds of others. The music plays through us and all around us. Just as at times some exotic species of mushroom springs up within us.

Zhuangzi helps us discover an anarchistic epistemology and sensibility. He describes a state in which "you are open to everything you see and hear, and allow this to act through you."

Part of wuwei, doing without doing, is "knowing without knowing," knowing as being open to the things known, rather than conquering and possessing the objects of knowledge. This means not imposing our prejudices (whether our own personal ones, our culture's, or those built into the human mind) on the Ten Thousand Things.

ANARCHY RULES

Zhuangzi, like Laozi, is a Pre-Ancientist Anarchist. He looks back to the non-existent, more than real, yet historically–rooted Dynasty of the Yellow Emperor, the Era of the Uncarved Block. The age prior to the rise domination – before the ascendancy of the State, the Patriarchy, the Class System and the Megamachine. The establishment of this Many-Headed Monster was a huge historical mistake, a serious but also a laughable one. At once Theater of Cruelty and Comedy of Errors. Napoleon (who laid siege to nations and murdered multitudes in order to become Emperor of a small island) once said, *La Force n'est jamais ridicule*. For Zhuangzi, all attempts to dominate reality and to *force one's way* are not only ridiculous but indeed absurd. Even the long saga of domination is at once both tragedy and farce.

A propos the absurdity of the State, Zhuangzi quotes Xu Yu as saying: "You want to govern the world and the world is already well governed." The history of the State is the history of replacing good rule by evil. For over 99 percent of human history and 99.9998 percent of earth history, the planet was governed quite well. Then came the Monster. Zhuangzi, who lived in the Period of the Warring States (alias "interesting times"), recounts the opening act of this World Historical Tragicomedy, while we're fortunate enough to have front-row seats for the dénouement.

As enjoyable as utopian fantasy and radical nostalgia may be, neither is required in this case. Zhuangzi was looking back to real history.

For Zhuangzi, there's an alternative to this Tragicomedy: the Play of Anarchy. Anarchy, the anti-political politics of wuwei. The anarchic ruler rules without ruling. "No one is aware of him, but he brings happiness to every man. He stands on that which is not known and wanders in the land of nowhere." This is nothing like Bakunin's anarchist Invisible Dictatorship that guides the Masses strategically from behind the scenes. A Dictatorship that is "without insignia, titles or official rights, and all the stronger for having none of the paraphernalia of power." Zhuangzi's ruler renounces all kinds of manipulation and even the subtlest forms of domination. Zhuangzi agrees with Laozi that "the Empire is a spiritual thing." And the Spirit of the Empire is the Spirit of Anarchy.

What could such an anarchic ruler be like? For an example, Zhuangzi looks back to the ancient sage (traditionally called "The True Man of Old") who "did not forget his beginning and did not seek his end. He accepted what he was given with delight and, and when it was gone he gave it no more thought." This sage was in many ways merely the ordinary person of a prior age before the Uncarved Block was chopped up, before the integrity of nature and humanity were shattered by the violence of the State.

In that world, both human society and nature were gift economies. People practiced primal "economics," the *nomos* of the *oikos*: "home rule"! This was "economics" in the sense of the extravagant and automatic self-allocation of abundant non-resources. Before the institution of industrialized agriculture, the rise of scarcity and exploitation, and the origins of Imperial Barbarism, human beings could still experience the rich generosity of nature, the overflowing of being. The Daoist sage preserves this Spirit of the Gift in a world gone insane with acquisitiveness and possessiveness.

If we fall under Zhuangzi's spell (if we're wooed by his way!), are we naively yearning for the permanent reality of a mere Temporary Autochthonous Zone of the imagination? Or are we lapsing into radical nostalgia for a romanticized distant past? As enjoyable as utopian fantasy and radical nostalgia may be, neither is required in this case. Zhuangzi was looking back to real history, as mythologized and poeticized as this history has been. Eden and all its variations have actual historical roots in gathering and hunting societies, and in the village communities of the late Neolithic. But more crucially, Zhuangzi is describing a living world that anyone can enter in the present, through a wuweian practice that undoes the psychic mechanisms of domination and allows us to open ourselves up to experience—to the absolute gratuity of all that appears. After all, that's the way reality actually is, beyond the illusions of all reality "principles." When everything is a gift, the only appropriate attitude to life is gratitude and joy at receiving completely undeserved largesse. Everything is *lagniappe*!

So maybe the only Emperor is the Emperor of Ice Cream (Quick. It's melting!). Zhuangzi says or hints at a great deal about the qualities this anarchic ruler (that is, just anybody who wanders along the Wayless Way). Scattered through the AnarChapters we find traits such as these: Calmness and equanimity; Intensity and spontaneity of feelings and passions. Skepticism about her own knowledge; Lack of concern for praise or blame; Freedom from guilt; Refusal to conform to the expectations of others; Rejection of all subservience and subordination; Humility; Creativity of thinking; Openness to every point of view; Love of solitude; Compassion for all beings; Absence of meanness, rancor and resentment; Lack of self-importance, egotism and arrogance; Reasonableness and fairness. Self(less)-Confidence; Disdain for traditions and institutions; Fierce loyalty to the truth of experience and of things themselves.

Is this ruler-sage then a good example for others? Zhuangzi says that people tell him that the good ruler does what is right, promotes law and order, and makes sure that people are "never tempted to break the law." Doesn't it sound fantastic? It seems much like some people's idea of anarchy—everybody does what's right not because of coercion, but because they follow the good example of others. But for Zhuangzi this isn't nearly anarchistic enough. The problem is that it "subverts virtue," by which he means that it undermines the creative power of each person to act rightly and skillfully in a given situation. Establishing such a system of rule is like "making a mosquito carry a mountain on its back." Zhuangzi would undoubtedly be nauseated by all the talk of "role models" that we hear in schools and mass media today. His own advice is for each of us to keep our own minds clear, follow our own way, impose it on no one, do what we can, and be satisfied. We should watch out for rulers, including the best of all rulers (maybe *especially* the best of all rulers), and avoid *trying* to be a good example.

The problem is the intrusion of the ego. One of Zhuangzi's persistent themes—the very secret of wise (non-)rul—is, "Get rid of self-obsession!" Paradoxically, "the perfect man has no self, the holy man has no merit, the sage has no reputation." "No more gurus!" teaches Zhuangzi. And get rid of that inner guru! The more we think of our self, the more everything appears imperfect, unacceptable, and completely inadequate—including our own beloved self. The more we claim credit and recognition, the less we deserve it. And the less reason anyone would have to give it to us. The more we try to become heroic, self-asserting "individuals" the more we become pitiful puppets playing a ridiculous role.

BEING GOOD FOR NOTHING

Zhuangzi was a radical relativist and perspectivist. Not in the nihilistic Post-Mortemism sense of losing all sense of materiality and rootedness in the real, but rather in the Pre-Ancientist sense of openness to both the radical uniqueness and the natural commonality of all beings. Openness to both their absolute emptiness and their dense physicality. According to Zhuangzi, we miss both the uniqueness of others and our commonality with them because "we cling to our own point of view, as if everything depended on it." We can't shift our perspective. We can't see the perspective of the other person, the other tree, the other fish.

Zhuangzi's relativism seems to go to wild extremes. He might seem crazy for saying that "No one has lived longer than a dead child," and that Peng Zu (who lasted a not negligible seven-hundred years) "died young." Yet any of us, like Zhuangzi, can pick up a piece of stone that is a billion years old. What's the usual life span for us— insects of a day that we are —compared to that? Should we congratulate each other on every second that we manage to survive? And whatever the length of one's life, it equals precisely one life. Peng Zu "alone is famous today for having lived a long time, and everybody tries to ape him. Isn't it pitiful?" Zhuangzi says that we'd be better off if we weren't so pitiful and self-pitying. A shocking thought! Maybe the length of my life is suited precisely to someone like me.

We aren't very good at "thinking like a mountain," but most of us live as if we think we have the lifespan of a mountain.

Zhuangzi's works are full of stories about the relativity of all things, and the human tendency to ignore the perspective, and the way, of other beings. He points out that a human who sleeps in a wet place will get aches and pains, but it's a perfect resting place for an eel. A human who lives up a tall tree will be anxiety-ridden, but a monkey takes it in stride. He mentions two famous women who were thought to be the most beautiful in all of China. Yet fish, on seeing them, dive to the bottom of the water, birds fly away in horror, and deer run away terrified. Who is the true judge of beauty?

In one story, Zhuangzi is crossing a bridge with Huizi, points to the fish swimming around in a steam and remarks on how happy they are. Huizi replies, "You're crazy! How can you know what it's like to be a fish? You're not a fish!" Zhuangzi replies, "How do you know I don't know what it's like to be fish. You're not me!" In this tale, two profound truths hide behind one apparent sophistry. We can fail to recognize the experience of the other, and we can fail to recognize the otherness of the other.

And then there's the story of the huge old tree that is no good for lumber. A carpenter dismisses it as completely useless, since *he* can't use it. But its very uselessness has been useful to it in keeping it alive until it towers above all the other living things. In the story, the tree says to the carpenter, "You and I are both things. How can one thing judge another thing?" An

excellent question! Indeed, how can one being have the gall to impose its concept of value on every other of many billion times billions of beings in the universe?

One of the most famous of Zhuangzi's stories is "Three in the morning." He tells of a monkey trainer who decides to give the monkeys three acorns in the morning and four in the afternoon. The monkeys are infuriated. So the trainer says, "OK, you get four in the morning and three in the afternoon!" And the monkeys are all delighted. A common reaction to this story is, "What stupid monkeys and what a brilliant trainer!" But those who jump to this conclusion may be a bit slower than the monkeys they laugh at. Somehow it doesn't occur to these dull-witted primates that the monkeys are the best judges of whether they're hungrier in the morning or in the afternoon! And the trainer was not necessarily any genius either. He was just a down-to-earth Daoist, smart enough to figure out what the monkeys were rather obviously trying to communicate. And as for the monkeys—they got exactly what they wanted.

Beyond making monkeys out of certain overeducated Third Chimpanzees, Zhuangzi seems to be saying that we tend to hang on to our precious acorn distribution systems (what Wilhelm Reich called "character armor") for no good reason. We try to control other beings (monkeys, people, the things of the world) in completely irrational ways, not realizing that there's really nothing at stake.

He might have added that if we stop wasting our time trying to train monkeys a few more acorns might grow into magnificent oak trees.

Throughout all these tales of many life forms, Zhuangzi develops a certain concept of value: what we would now call a non-anthropocentric one. He says: "You were born in a human form, and you find joy in it. Yet there are ten thousand other forms endlessly transforming that are equally good, and the joy of these is untold." By reducing everything to a narrow, monolithic standard of value — *economic* value, *instrumental* value, or even *use* value – we destroy these myriad modes of enjoyment, and finally make our own lives less than enjoyable as we survey a devastated landscape of domination. The Daoist rejects this sad, absurd reductionism and affirms the incomparable value of all the diverse forms of life and the manifold expressions of natural and human creativity. Johannes Baader said much the same of Dada: "A Dadaist is someone who loves life in all its uncountable forms, and who knows and says that, 'Life is not here alone, but also there, there, there (*da, da, da*).'"

Both Daoism and Dadaism take a stand for all that is devalued according to the nihistic calculus of civilization and domination. Zhuangzi comments ironically that "[a]ll men know the use of the useful, but nobody knows the use of the useless!" And Tzara echoes the irony in his remark that "Dada is as useless as everything else in life."

Both Daoism and Dadaism take a stand for all that is devalued according to the nihistic calculus of civilization and domination.

BECOMING A BUG'S ARM

Zuangzi says that when Laozi died, Chin Shih went to the funeral, "yelled three times, and left." The mourners were shocked and thought this was a disgrace. Zhuangzi, on the other hand, saw it as a quite reasonable response. Maybe Chin Shih was giving three cheers for old Laozi. Or maybe he was just getting his mourning over with quickly. Either way it makes perfect sense. The alternative is to hang on to what can't be caught. "The Master came because it was time. He left because he followed the natural flow." Zhuangzi was a rebel against all that is stupid, unimaginative, cruel and oppressive, but he never saw the point in rebelling against our own nature and the nature of nature. For Zhuangzi, following the Dao means achieving "freedom from bondage," exactly as Spinoza said almost two millennia later in his *Ethics*. Zhuangzi concludes his funeral story in the spirit of his great pre-Ancientist predecessor Heraclitus: "The wood is consumed but the fire burns on." We shouldn't be surprised that when we try to hold on to the wood we end up with a handful of ashes. And what kind of buffoon would to try to hold on to fire?

Zhuangzi's spirituality of death is a refusal to fall into the death neuroses of civilization. His approach with death seems weird, shocking, and abnormal because it is neither safely tragic nor safely romantic. It seems unnatural because of its stark naturalism. He is actually willing to approach the unapproachable. He befriends the corpse. Old, dependable Death. "Brother Death, please mind the store." He also avoids death psychosis, civilization's poisoned legacy from ancient barbarism. The delusion that death is neither tragic nor romantic because its just not there. He announces loudly that the grinning corpse cannot be evaded. Grin back! Zhuangzi recounts the words of Master Li to the dying Master Lai: "How marvelous the Creator is! What is he going to make of you next? Where is he going to send you? Will he make you into a rat's liver? Will he make you into a bug's arm?"

In confronting the reality of death, Zhuangzi confronts the reality of life. To him, the idea that everything just changes form, so there is really no death, is a fraud. "One may say, 'There is no death.' What good does that do? When the body decays, so does the mind. Is this not a great sorrow? Is life really this absurd? Am I the only one who sees the absurdity?" Apparently there was some New Age ideology floating around in the Ancient World, and Zhuangzi didn't buy it. Death is real, so life is irreducibly absurd. But we have no good reason to flee from this absurdity. Rather we need to embrace it—as part of life. The question is whether we are capable of embracing life itself, rather than clinging to our own ghostly phantasms of life.

Zhuangzi's affirmation of the laughable, sometimes outrageous, sometimes grotesque absurdity of real life runs throughout his stories and aphorisms. In this he was a precursor of the Carnivalesque. Bakhtin explains that The laughter of Carnival is an affirmation of our place in the Cosmos and

Chaos of Nature. It "does not permit seriousness to atrophy and to be torn away from the one being, ever incomplete. It restores this ambivalent wholeness." Carnival is "the true feast of time, the feast of becoming, change and renewal" and is "hostile to all that was immortalized and complete." In Carnival, people participate in "the wholeness of the world," and affirm the fact that "they too are incomplete, they also die and are revived and renewed."

Zhuangzi is a Pre-Ancientist rather than a Post-Mortemist precisely because he faces both life and death.

THE TRUTH IS THE HOLE

Most of what has passed for dialectic in the West has quickly subverted all dialectical subversion by falling into dogmatism and harnessing an anarchic procedure on behalf of an imperious ego and the forces of domination. As Tzara put it, dogmatists use this pseudo-dialectic for "looking hurriedly at things from the opposite point of view, so as to impose their opinions indirectly," so it turns into a game of "heads I win, tales you lose, dressed up to look scholarly," "an amusing machine that leads us (in banal fashion) to the opinions we would have held in any case."

Daoist dialectic, on the other hand, resists closure and cooptation, leaping the abyss between theory and practice, between spirit and sensibility, between being and nothingness. It remains suspended above the abyss while at the same time firmly grounded in nature. From this powerfully precarious position it affirms the logic of the absurd and the absurdity of all logics, the metaphysics of physicality and the physicality of all metaphysics. It inhabits at once the utopian nowhere of meaning and the topian density of earth. It is this intoxicating air and this rich and fertile soil that nourish Zhuangzi's ironic spirit of affirmation.

Zhuangzi is a dialectical thinker, not merely as a vague precursor of the real thing, but in the most radical sense. In his world, all things are making each other what they are. Minds are creating realities and realities are transforming minds. Everything is in a process of incessant transformation. A thing always is what it is not, and is not what it is. As he explains, "'That' comes out of 'this' and 'this' depends on 'that' – which is to say that 'this' and 'that' give birth to each other." But where there is birth there must be death; where there is death there must be birth. Where there is acceptability there must be unacceptability; where there is unacceptability there must be acceptability. Where there is recognition of right there must be recognition of wrong; where there is recognition of wrong there must be recognition of right."

The self itself is entirely immersed in this delirious dialectic of relativities. In what may be his most famous story, Zhuangzi says that he dreamed he was a butterfly. On awakening, he wondered whether he had really dreamed he was a butterfly or whether the butterfly was now dreaming it was Zhuangzi! This is usually taken as an instance of Zhuangzi's light-hearted skepticism, or an example of goodnatured and perhaps slightly sophistic philosophical playfulness. And it may very well be both of these. But it's also an early expression of the injunction to "take your dreams for realities." Not because you can then heroically will them to become real, but because they are already absolutely real. Zhuangzi's butterfly-dream-mind is as much a reality as his human-being-in-the-world-mind. Mind, says Zhuangzi, surpasses the boundaries created by our illusion of the unified ego. Reality is surre(gion)al.

The Inner/Anar Chapters end with a story about boundaries. It is the story of Hun Tun, or Primal Chaos. According to this tale, Light and Darkness decided to do Chaos the favor of giving him the seven openings by which the world can be perceived. So they drilled one hole in him each day for seven days. On the seventh day, he died. Dualism imposes on Chaos a differentiation that ultimately destroys it. Our access to the indeterminate, pre-categorical reality, the flesh of being, the primal source is lost. Yet we have a way back to that source, since we are also that chaos. As Tzara expresses it, "How can anyone hope to order the chaos that constitutes that infinite, formless variation: man?"

Zhuangzi's dialectic accepts unity only if it's pervaded by diversity, difference and multiplicity. Harmony only if it exists through opposition and discord. His holism is not pacification. "That which kills life does not die; that which gives life to life does not live. This is the kind of thing it is: there's nothing it doesn't send off, nothing it doesn't welcome, nothing it doesn't destroy, nothing it doesn't complete. It's name is Peace-in-Strife. After the strife it attains completion." As Proudhon said, "Freedom is the Mother, not the Daughter, of Order." Mother Chaos died giving birth to the Cosmos.

In speaking up for Hun Tun, Zhuangzi was a True Surre(gion)alist Of Old. He realizes that all regions overlap and interpenetrate. He knows that "the Way has never known boundaries." It is only because of our imposition of our own conceptual categories, our creation of a "this," and consequently of a "that," that boundaries arise. Just as Laozi said that "the path that can be followed is not the true path," Zhuangzi says that we should "wander where there is no trail." This pathless path is the way of experience, the way of awakened mind, rather than the dualistic way of already knowing, of preconceived ideas, of dominating and thus destroying a living, moving reality.

The moral of the Zhunagzi's story of Hun Tun is left unsaid. One might imagine that it's something like this: "Hun Tun is dead. But don't mourn, disorganize!" Hun Tun died and did not die. Seek the unity beyond the dualities. And seek to resurrect Chaos.

—October 2002

The Zhuangzi quotes come from Burton Watson, *The Complete Works of Chuang Tzu* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1968), and Gia-Fu Feng and Jane English, *Chuang Tsu: Inner Chapters* (New York: Random House, 1974). The Tzara citations are from *Seven Dada Manifestos* (London and New York: Calder Publications and Riverrun Press, 1992). Other quotations are from Gary Snyder, *The Practice of the Wild* (San Francisco: North Point Press, 1990), Johannes Baader as cited in Hans Richter, *Dada: Art and Anti-Art* (New York: Thames and Hudson, 1997), Mikhail Bakhtin, *Rabelais and his World* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1984), and the "Hymn of Creation" in *A Sourcebook of Indian Philosophy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1957).

Buddhist Anarchism

by Gary Snyder

Buddhism holds that the universe and all creatures in it are intrinsically in a state of complete wisdom, love and compassion; acting in natural response and mutual interdependence. The personal realization of this from-the-beginning state cannot be had for and by one-"self" — because it is not fully realized unless one has given the self up; and away.

In the Buddhist view, that which obstructs the effortless manifestation of this is Ignorance, which projects into fear and needless craving. Historically, Buddhist philosophers have failed to analyze out the degree to which ignorance and suffering are caused or encouraged by social factors, considering fear-and-desire to be given facts of the human condition. Consequently the major concern of Buddhist philosophy is epistemology and "psychology" with no attention paid to historical or sociological problems. Although Mahayana Buddhism has a grand vision of universal salvation, the actual achievement of Buddhism has been the development of practical systems of meditation toward the end of liberating a few dedicated individuals from psychological hangups and cultural conditionings. Institutional Buddhism has been conspicuously ready to accept or ignore the inequalities and tyrannies of whatever political system it found itself under. This can be death to Buddhism, because it is death to any meaningful function of compassion. Wisdom without compassion feels no pain.

The mercy of the West has been social revolution; the mercy of the East has been individual insight into the basic self/void. We need both.

No one today can afford to be innocent, or indulge himself in ignorance of the nature of contemporary governments, politics and social orders. The national polities of the modern world maintain their existence by deliberately fostered craving and fear: monstrous protection rackets. The "free world" has become economically dependent on a fantastic system of stimulation of greed which cannot be fulfilled, sexual desire which cannot be satiated and hatred which has no outlet except against oneself, the persons one is supposed to love, or the revolutionary aspirations of pitiful, poverty-stricken marginal societies like Cuba or Vietnam. The conditions of the Cold War have turned all modern societies — Communist included — into vicious distorters of man's true potential. They create populations of "preta" — hungry ghosts, with giant appetites and throats no bigger than needles. The soil, the forests and all animal life are being consumed by these cancerous collectivities; the air and water of the planet is being fouled by them.

There is nothing in human nature or the requirements of human social organization which intrinsically requires that a culture be contradictory, repressive and productive of violent and frustrated personalities. Recent findings in anthropology and psychology make this more and more evident. One can prove it for himself by taking a good look at his own nature through meditation. Once a person has this much faith and insight, he must be led to a deep concern with the need for radical social change through a variety of hopefully non-violent means.

The joyous and voluntary poverty of Buddhism becomes a positive force. The traditional harmlessness and refusal to take life in any form has nation-shaking implications. The practice of meditation, for which one needs only "the ground beneath one's feet," wipes out mountains of junk being pumped into the mind by the mass media and supermarket universities. The belief in a serene and generous fulfillment of natural loving desires destroys ideologies which blind, maim and repress — and points the way to a kind of community which would amaze "moralists" and transform armies of men who are fighters because they cannot be lovers.

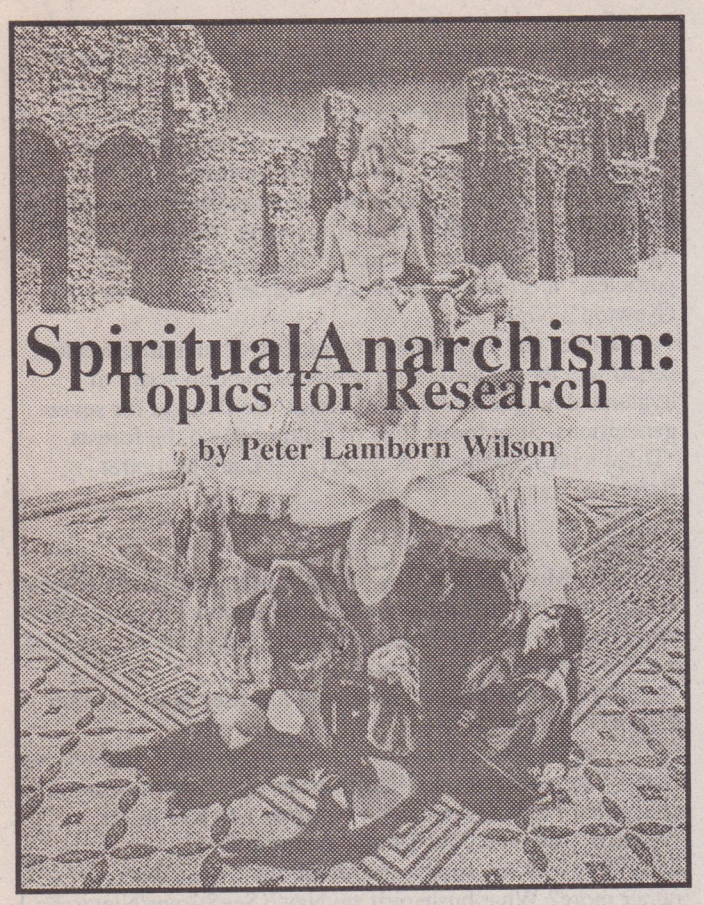
Avatamsaka (Kegon) Buddhist philosophy sees the world as a vast interrelated network in which all objects and creatures are necessary and illuminated. From one standpoint, governments, wars, or all that we consider "evil" are uncompromisingly contained in this totalistic realm. The hawk, the swoop and the hare are one. From the "human" standpoint we cannot live in those terms unless all beings see with the same enlightened eye. The Bodhisattva lives by the sufferer's standard, and he must be effective in aiding those who suffer.

The mercy of the West has been social revolution; the mercy of the East has been individual insight into the basic self/void. We need both. They are both contained in the traditional three aspects of the Dharma path: wisdom (prajna), meditation (dhyana), and morality (sila). Wisdom is intuitive knowledge of the mind of love and clarity that lies beneath one's ego-driven anxieties and aggressions. Meditation is going into the mind to see this for yourself — over and over again, until it becomes the mind you live in. Morality is bringing it back out in the way you live, through personal example and responsible action, ultimately toward the true community (sangha) of "all beings."

This last aspect means, for me, supporting any cultural and economic revolution that moves clearly toward a free, international, classless world. It means using such means as civil disobedience, outspoken criticism, protest, pacifism, voluntary poverty and even gentl violence if it comes to a matter of restraining some impetuous redneck. It means affirming the widest possible spectrum of non-harmful individual behavior — defending the right of individuals to smoke hemp, eat peyote, be polygynous, polyandrous or homosexual. Worlds of behavior and custom long banned by the Judaeo-Capitalist-Christian-Marxist West. It means respecting intelligence and learning, but not as greed or means to personal power. Working on one's own responsibility, but willing to work with a group. "Forming the new society within the shell of the old" — the IWW slogan of fifty years ago.

The traditional cultures are in any case doomed, and rather than cling to their good aspects hopelessly it should be remembered that whatever is or ever was in any other culture can be reconstructed from the unconscious, through meditation. In fact, it is my own view that the coming revolution will close the circle and link us in many ways with the most creative aspects of our archaic past. If we are lucky we may eventually arrive at a totally integrated world culture with matrilineal descent, free-form marriage, natural-credit communist economy, less industry, far less population and lots more national parks.

(1961)



Spiritual Anarchism: Topics for Research

by Peter Lamborn Wilson

"Cowper came to me and said: 'O that I were insane always. I will never rest. Can you not make me truly insane? I will never rest till I am so. O that in the bosom of God I was hid. You retain health and yet are as mad as any of us all—over us all—mad as a refuge from unbelief—from Bacon, Newton and Locke.' "

—William Blake (1819)

1.

Stone Age Conservative (tribal, roughly egalitarian, proto-shamanic, hunter/gatherer/gardener, gift economy, etc.)

Sumerian city states (4th Millennium): the breakdown of original unstriated human polity; the emergence of separation (see P. Clastres).

Enkidu in Gilgamesh: domestication of the "Wild Man".

The Good Old Cause & Everlasting Gospel—what Blake called Druidism—in fact has always been the guise of our Stone Age shamanism and "goddess" paganism

vs.

the 6000-year Illuminati con-job: state religion.

The emergence of money as the Sexuality of the Dead.

2.

Bronze Age: war god paganism, leading to Iron Age imperial paganism of Rome, the Great Beast of Revelation;

against this the early Church appears as a dialectic of resistance, especially in its Essene or Nazarite/Ebionite form, Zealotry, gnosticism, social reform (moneylenders out of Temple, Gospel of the Poor, etc.) and neoplatonic mysticism

vs.

the "Donation of Constantine", appropriation of Christianity by Rome itself (just as Sumerian priest kings appropriated Neolithic spirituality as the "suppressed content" of the Temple cults).

Christianity, originally a radical-gnostic cult ("Kingdom of heaven within you") now functions badly as state religion:--severe contradictions, schizo-culture, etc.

3.

But all religion is rooted in basic contradiction: the old Stone Age spiritual content (the Clastrian mythos, so to speak) plastered over with Metal Age ideology of hegemonic separation. (See especially the Enuma Elish or "Babylonian Genesis" where war god Marduk slays Tiamat the Neolithic goddess.) Religion constantly attempts to overcome or rectify this contradiction. But the **moneylenders always return to the Temple and rectification is once again shunted off into heresy, apostasy, magical shadows, ritual crime.**

Heretical millennial sects talk of restoring the Golden Age; **this dream derives from actual memories** (stored in myth) of Stone Age rough-egalitarian hunting/gathering/gardening gift-economy and shamano-pagan society.

4.

Spirituality does not equal religion. Spirituality is the imaginal creative (esprit) of the social; religion its inverse or negation, its "spectre" as Blake says:--the alienation of that creativity into powers of oppression. However, due to complex paradoxes of dialectics, the kernel of spirituality is often found encased in shells of religion—especially the mystics (e.g. Eckhardt and the Spiritual Franciscans)—and the poison of religion often taints the heresies, especially if they gain real power.

5.

In religious times all talk and practice of non-authoritarianism will be expressed in religious terms—usually as heresy, schism, apostasy, magic, etc.—but sometimes as "reform within the Church" or marginal but permitted forms of excess (monastic communism for example).

Historians of anarchism who trace it from a few Greek Cynics direct to the Enlightenment, with nothing in between, fail to appreciate the realness of mentalité: **every age must experience something of freedom (if only its dream) on pain of losing its humanity.** The history of anarchism as consciousness (rather than ideology) lies buried in an archaeology of spiritual resistance. We need to re-read the heretics. (See for example R. Vaneighem's work on the heresy of the Free Spirit.)

6.

The Problem of Gnostic Dualism. Extreme forms of spirituality often identify the social world with the natural world — and condemn them both. They reject the "god of creation" as evil and even revile the "soul" as principle of life. Only "spirit" satisfies such extremists. Their body-hatred becomes more exaggerated and severe even than that of the Church (which at least condemns suicide and promises the resurrection of the body).

The problem of dualism haunts anarchism, I think. Proudhon's hatred of God may have derived from his early reading of Gnostic Dualist literature (while he was typesetting it) —a kind of secular Catharism. Atheist materialism, `a la Bakunin, can seem weirdly immaterial sometimes, ridden by its own hobgoblins, categorical imperatives, blind science-worship, machine over human, strange asexuality.

Christian/dualist body-hatred occupies the secret heart of our " environmental crisis "; — even as post-Christians we cannot escape the Conquest of Nature motif, which colors nearly all 19th-20th century progressive thinking.

Possible help in overcoming such crypto-Dualism might come from a "pantheistic monist" approach to shamanic and pagan models—what T. McKenna called **the Archaic Revival — not a return *to* the Stone Age but a return *of* the Stone Age.**

7.

Because we're all post-Enlightenment whether we like it or not, "Science" poses for us the problem of teleology (or teleonomics as Henri Bergson called it). We really believe in the Death of God. The spectral aspect of the Enlightenment—what Adorno (?) called **"the cruel instrumentality of Reason — flattens permissible consciousness into one big 2-D map.** Any manifestation of meaning would threaten the monopoly of "brute accidence", "random collision of particles," mechanistic/behaviorist models of consciousness—"Newton's Night".

Hence the contemporary plague of meaninglessness: we all feel its germs lurking behind some thin scrim of hygienic daylight. Collapse of ethics. No thought for seven generations. Stop forest fires by cutting down the forests. "There's no such things as Society"— Lady Margaret Baroness Thatcher.

8.

The Movement of the Social on the unconscious level constituted in itself a kind of (anti)religion. After all what proof exists for atheist materialism?— just as spooky as God, really — the absence of meaning.

The Communist Party as yet another Holy Roman Empire.

And the philosophical weakness of anarchism surely lies somewhere near the fault line between meaninglessness and ethics. **How can there exist a right way to live in an "absurd" universe?** Existential commitment? Leap in the dark? But why not simply carve out one's own share, or rather more? What bushspirit sayNay?(SeeStirner/Nietzsche.)

Nietzsche of course went mad and signed his last letter "Dionysus and the Crucified One"—a god reborn, but only into speechless abyss. **Possibly we need to consider the exigency of a "rough morality"—and perhaps even some sort of meaning—however inexpressible—or even "spiritual".**

9.

Now with the collapse of the Social and the triumph of Global Capital we shattered remnants could put on happy faces and say that globalism is just the new internationalism, the final Final Stage of Capital, and that soon the means of production will finally fall ripely into the hands of an enlightened global proletariat. Or—we could gloomily admit that the Totality has engulfed us, that History is dead, that alienation is universal, that the last Enclosures have been carried out, that the logic of technology and money combined ends with the elimination of the human, Virilio's time/space pollution, the Big Accident. Or—we could go on refusing to accept the dichotomy—go on demanding the impossible. But **what is the impossible, if not a kind of spirituality?**

If religion and ideology both have betrayed us perhaps we need a new paradigm. But every "new" worldview has ancestors. **Post-modernism needn't mean simply sifting through the rubbish of history to construct more "revolutionary" commodities and attitudes.** Let's say we want to try to imagine a non-authoritarian Green movement based on Proudhonian anarcho-federalism and Kropotkinite mutual aid—basic "plumb line anarchist" stuff—but rooted in some form of spirituality. Where could we look for inspiration? Do we have a "tradition"?

10.

A genealogy of resistance? a "golden chain of transmission" passing on the Stone Age autonomist spirit from age to age?

Since we've mentioned medieval Europe let's start there; unfortunately we'll have to ignore the Classical era, the Orient, etc.—Taoism for example, or Sufism and Shiite Extremism, radical Kabala (Sabbatai Sevi and Jacob Frank), Hinduism (esp. Tantra, or radical syncretists like Kabir, or the Bengali Terrorist Party)—also tribal shamanism and its history from Stone Age to present. Instead we'll stick with Christianity, if only because most of us are brought up to consider it the Enemy par excellence.

Subject for research:

Joachim di Fiori and the Spiritual Franciscans;

Beghards & Beguines—Brethren of the Free Spirit;

The Adamites (literal return of Golden Age—went naked "for a sign");

Radical wing of Renaissance Hermeticism, esp. Giordano Bruno, burned at the stake for heresy 1600, and the alchemist Paracelsus, who supported the Peasants Revolt 1525 against Luther and the princes;

The Radical Reformation—neither Catholic nor Protestant. Anabaptists and "Bible Communism";

The Spiritualists (Sebastian Franck, Schwenckfeld, Paracelsus) who preached an exoteric Invisible Church with no dogma, sacraments, ministers or authorities;

The Libertines;

The Family of Love;

The Rosicrucians, the idea of "radical tolerance," influence of Sufi alchemy and Jewish Kabala;

German mystics—Eckhardt, Tauler, Suso—later Jacob Boehme and the Hermetic Pietists (Jane Leade & the London Philadelphians);

English Revolution (see Christopher Hill and J.P. Thompson)—Diggers, Ranters, Levellers, Seekers, Fifth Monarchy Men and Muggletonians (Blake's mother was a Muggletonian), early Quakers, Antinomians; later the Blasphemers' Chapels;

Leftwing Freemasonry: John Toland, the Druids and Freethinkers. Paine & Blake as "druids." Masonic societies behind the French Revolution;

William Blake—sine qua non;

The left wing of German and English Romanticism;

Charles Fourier as Hermetic Socialist;

American Romantics—Thoreau, Emerson, S. Pearl Andrews, Spiritualism and Radical Reform, the "Religion of Nature" (Native American influence);

Gustav Landauer, Gh. Scholem, W. Benjamin;

Surrealism (esp. the fascination with Hermeticism)—also R. Callois and G. Bataille;

The return of shamanism (since at least the 18th century);

Neo-paganism;

Universalist heresies;

Psychedelic cults, "entheogenic ceremonialism"; etc.

11.

The Critique of Civilization needs a strong science of its own. Post-Enlightenment science with its "dead matter" crypto-metaphysics needs a Kuhnian revolution. Restitution of meaning. Re-enchantment of the landscape. Not just a Sorelian myth but a real myth. Surrealist Surrationalist Surregionalist subversion requires potent Earth-centered spirituality, a Gaia Hypothesis that's more than hypothetical—a spiritual experience. Ecstasy as enstasy. (See Bakhtin)**—festival consciousness as magic.**

In this context **Hermeticism recommends itself because of its rectified neoplatonic view of matter as spirit—the doctrine of Earth as a living being.** (Nicholas of Cusa, Pico, Ficino, Cambridge Neoplatonists, etc.) Hermeticism is not a religion but a science of spirit and imagination—empirical, experiential, and experimental. Historically it's closer to us than shamanism or the oriental ways, culturally familiar (tho also strange, always strange). It's compatible with Christian, Jewish, Islamic and Hindu mysticism, maybe also with Taoism and Buddhism, certainly with Rosicrucianism and Masonry, and with most of the great heresies.

12.

I don't want to argue for "anarchist spirituality" or "spiritual anarchism" on principle. By their fruits shall ye know them. "Research" here means participation, **a willingness to hallucinate and be swept away beyond the Censor of Enlightened Reason, perhaps even into the daemonic. Psychonauts in psychic bathyspheres.**

—October 2002

In Western culture, anyone who is too deviant gets locked up, yet many more spiritual cultures honor the mad ones, sometimes as shamans. They're said to have vision and to be able to see other worlds. If they become absolutely damaging and are not participating in the collective reality at all, then sometimes they're sent off to be hermits—but not out of disrespect or invalidation. But in this culture there's no place for mystics or shamans.

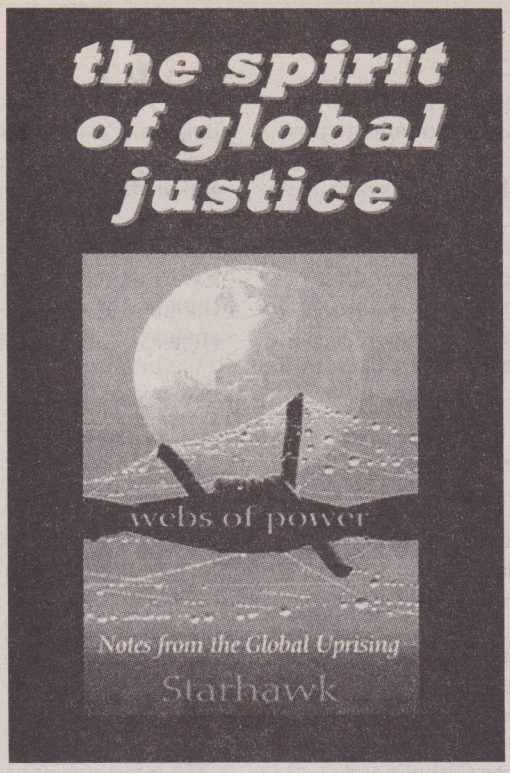
The dictionary definition of psychosis is "a sharply altered and different reality." But that's what we go for when we're doing ritual or taking psychedelics: we're altering our reality. . . . When I first entered the Pagan community, I was having some intense mystical experiences that I couldn't tell anybody about, mostly because I had no language or lexicon to describe the things in my head, but I managed to find other outsiders who under- stood. It took me some time to learn the languages of Paganism, so that I could communicate my experiences to other people. Now, even if the rest of the world thinks I'm crazy, I'm okay with that—because the rest of the world really is insane. I look at global capitalism and transnational corporations and how much of the planet is being destroyed and workers exploited, and I think being crazy or depressed is a healthy reaction to that!

—Joi Wolfwomyn

Excerpt from the book Modern Pagans: An Investigation of Contemporary Pagan Practices. Eds. V. Vale & John Sulak. *Available from RE:Search Publications*:
(415) 362-1465 www.researchpubs.com

Webs of Power, Notes from the Global Uprising. Starhawk. New Society Publishers, 2002. 288 pages. $17.95 (available from FE Books)

Review by Lea Wood



This book is a must read for understanding the revolution of our time. Anarchist, feminist, pagan—Starhawk speaks to everyone who has been on the barricades, actively or supportively, against the multinationals working to maximize their control over our lives. This is the story of the anti-globalization movement since Seattle 1999 when we exposed the WTO and its corporate agenda to the media spotlight.

In Part I (*Actions*), Starhawk describes the protests from Seattle to Washington D.C. and touches on 9/11. The second part (*Visions*) grapples with key questions confronting the global justice movement, including many ideas about strategies for the future. Concerned that the changes in the country since 9/11 could deflect the movement, she speaks of new strategies and tactics that this challenge calls for, acknowledging that the forces against us are formidable, more than ever, given the escalation of repression by the police.

Starhawk takes us into the streets, including five days in Seattle's jail. These are dramatic stories taken from on-the-run dispatches she e-mailed to supporters, giving them riveting immediacy. But more than narrative, we need her penetrating analysis of the actions and the forces arrayed against us. She shows the conflicts between tactics and presents them in a way that gives everyone respect.

A case in point: The actions of the black bloc, she writes, "royally pissed me off" when they would not agree to the nonviolence standards of the protests' organizers in Seattle. Realizing that the black bloc had had no part in making the agreement of said standards—and believing it should have had a voice—she later came to argue for the radical edge that the bloc provids a vital part of the movement.

In the chapter "Rethinking Nonviolence," Starhawk begins with the classical nonviolence of Gandhi and King and continues to thoroughly examine its various aspects and uses, especially in relation to direct action.

"Empowering direct action," she writes, "looks for ways to embody our vision in the face of power, to get in the way of its workings....This requires great creativity....[it] aims at being more than symbolic; it looks for ways to interfere with and delegitimize the operations of injustice."

She believes the strongest tactics require modeling the kind of world we want in our actions, and further, that we do know in general what that world would look like. She describes this vision with five points.

In brief: 1) that enterprises must be rooted in communities and be responsible to communities and future generations; 2) that there is a commons to be protected, resources too vital to life to be exploited for the profit of a few, including things that sustain life, especially those that humans cannot create; 3) that as humans we have a collective responsibility for the well-being of others, and 5) that democracy means having a voice in the decisions that affect us, including economic decisions.

In the section entitled *Visions*, there are many examples of the above points actually at work somewhere in the world. Basic to a better world, she believes, is developing a different relationship with nature; according to Starhawk, we need to become "indigenous"—or bonded to the land—not mired in a separateness that allows for despoiling the environment because humans believe it exists primarily to serve them.

She quotes an Okanagan elder who says "our most essential responsibility is to learn to bond our whole individual selves and our communal selves to the land". To this, Starhawk says that the "whole system we call 'globalization' is predicated on the destruction of this bond."

This book covers so many facets pertinent to the revolution for "another world." One is an exhaustive analysis of direct action defined "as anything that directly confronts oppressive power," followed by examples of specific manifestations. "Direct action is a tool that needs to be used together with other tools" that include building coalitions, using legislative or court systems, and more.

Analogies between human actions and nature abound, one relating to the role of for diversity for a strong movement. "In nature, diversity means resilience." A prairie with hundreds of different plants growing together can weather pests or storms that would devastate a field of identical hybrid corn. Similarly, social movements need diversity to thrive.

The global justice movement, although white in North America, is one that is "inspired and rooted among people of color around the world, from the Zapatistas of Mexico to the insurrectionists of Bolivia who retook their water supply from privatization," and whom, in the fight against global corporate capitalism, have "faced torture, prison, and death, and have also joyfully pioneered new tactics and new forms of struggle."

Rich with new thinking, *Webs of Power* renews this activist's hope that "another world is possible."

Lea Wood is an 85-year-old activist and poet who has been bonded to the land in Underhill,Vermont for the last ten years, and formerly bonded to northern California.

Howling Wilderness and The Promised Land

by Don Lacoss

In mid-August, a three year-old lawsuit charging that environmentalist groups were religious extremists comparable to some of the more violent, intolerant ultra-orthodox Islamic sects collapsed when the attorney failed to meet a re-filing deadline with the U.S. Supreme Court.

The suit had been brought against Forest Guardians, the Superior Wilderness Action Network, and the U.S. Forest Service by the 125 companies that make up the Associated Contract Loggers (A.C.L.) of northern Minnesota. The loggers were asking for $600,000 in damages and permission to plunder timber from the Superior National Forest.

Lawyers for the A.C.L. argued that deep ecology was actually a religion, and so by extension, environmental groups that espoused its philosophies were cults, and by outlawing timber cutting on so-called "federal land," the Forest Service was favoring a particular set of religious doctrines and was therefore violating the guarantee of neutrality in matters of religion purportedly vouchsafed in the U.S. Constitution.

According to theological scholars at the logging company syndicate like former executive director, Larry Jones, Deep Ecology is an "earth-centered religion," a "belief system" that holds that "trees and Man [sic] are equal." Anti-logging activists who extol the virtues of forested spaces over industry profit and environmental degradation are spiritual zealots, and the government functionaries who are swayed by their proselytizing may turn out to be fanatical closet druids themselves.

Stephen Young, the A.C.L. lawyer and a former Republican Party senatorial candidate, explained his legal action on such esteemed venues as Rush Limbaugh's radio show by saying that clear-cutting in national forests had been restricted by the Forest Service for no reason other than reverence for some fringe New Age religion.

A U.S. District Court judge in Minnesota dismissed the case as "frivolous" in February 2000, but the A.C.L. petitioned the Supreme Court last year after reports that Wahabi Islamic extremists were responsible for the blitzkrieg attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon.

"The doctrine of Deep Ecology is the very worldview that gave rise to eco-terrorism. We feel that after the events of September 11, it's an obligation of the Supreme Court to keep religious fanaticism in check," Young said. "Just as devout faith in the literal words of various Hadith of Mohammad gave the Taliban license to impose through state power harsh conditions on the women of Afghanistan, so Deep Ecology gives license to its adherents to take extreme actions against those who would live by different beliefs."

Likening the plight of women in Afghanistan to that of lumber barons in northern Minnesota is staggering in its shamelessness.

Perhaps the less said about this sleazy episode the better, which is just as well, since it is so hard to get a firm analytic grasp on it because it is sad and sick on so many different levels. For instance, likening the plight of women in Afghanistan to that of lumber barons in northern Minnesota is staggering in its shamelessness, as it has been my experience that women living near industrial logging camps are subjected to at least the same sort of abuse, derision, and masculinist domination as women who had been living in Taliban-controlled Kandahar.

And we all know that if the U.S. government was serious about keeping homicidal religious terrorism in check, then John Ashcroft and the Army of God anti-abortionists would be in the Guantanamo Bay gulag. It was all obviously just a miserable attempt to slander and jam up anti-logging activists with legal action, and it failed.

But I can't help thinking about the broader philosophical implications of this lawsuit and what it says about those who supported it. I have no idea as to whether or not there are Deep Ecologists involved in Forest Guardians or the Superior Wilderness Action Network (and I suspect that none are to be found among the Forest Service feds), but in demonizing Deep Ecology as an alien fanatical religious practice in this lawsuit, we can see once again how tightly Christianity is bound to capitalist exploitation and ecological destruction.

Deep Ecology is not a single doctrine, but rather an ethical sensibility informed by a variety of perspectives on the relationship of humankind to the whole of wild nature's systems. We can oversimplify deep ecology by saying that its fundamentals include a belief in the intrinsic value of all forms of life, as well as the holistic diversity of those life forms. The economic, technological, and ideological beliefs that prop up Western civilization antagonistically threaten the existence and diversity of natural life systems.

Individuals who adhere to the ideas of Deep Ecology are obligated to work towards radically changing those deadly attitudes and social structures. Deep ecology challenges the long-held anthropocentrist notion which entitles humans to take advantage of and destroy wilderness at will and for private profit, a view obviously held sacred by the A.C.L. timber industrialists.

Anthropocentrism derives from core Judeo-Christian values that have been part of the settler-capitalist catechism on this continent since the early seventeenth-century. Consider, for example, the preaching of the powerful Puritan minister, John Cotton. In his popular pamphlet of the 1630s, "God's Promise to His Plantation," Cotton claimed that God desired colonists to "take possession" of land in New England, saying

that whosoever "bestoweth culture and husbandry upon it" has an inviolable divine right to own it.

The Native Americans, dying in large numbers from exposure to European diseases was proof that God wanted to wipe the slate clean for the Puritans and thereby better facilitate His decree in the Book of Genesis that humans aggressively "subdue" the earth. Christians were the center of the universe, exclusively licensed by Almighty God to dominate the land, eradicate wild nature, and replace it with the purity of civilization. "All the world out of the Church is as a wilderness, or at best, a wild field where all manner of unclean and wild beasts live and feed," Cotton proclaimed in 1642.

There were many others during the period who were at least as enthusiastic about Christ, colonization, and commercial cultivation as Cotton was, and these ideas, linked to distinctly Judeo-Christian models of linear (rather than seasonally cyclical) time, became ingrained in the settler psyche, especially during the era of westward expansion some two centuries later. Justified by the Calvinist capitalism of Adam Smith's The Wealth of Nations—complete with its fallacious notions about the ennobling, "civilizing" powers of wealth, markets, and economic growth -- the implications of Puritan repugnance for wilderness and wildness on the North American continent becomes depressingly clear.

As inheritors of Puritan fanaticism that have erected the violent, intolerant faith of capitalism, it is individuals and organizations like the A.C.L. who hold a worldview that advances a five hundred year-old campaign of terrorism against entire bioregions and "empowers its adherents to take extreme actions against those who would live by different beliefs."

Anarcho-spirituality and its Discontents:

A Personal Reflection

by MaxZine Weinstein

"What is inflated too much will burst into fragments."
—Ethiopian proverb

"Spiritual zombies no longer hear their inner guide."
—Alice Walker

In 1986, at the Haymarket anniversary anarchist gathering in Chicago, I landed in a "radical ritual."

We're told that we would start by calling in the directions. They get to West and call in the spirits of the water. We are just blocks from Lake Michigan. This body of water has nothing to do with the West because it sits to the East! I point this out and am shushed with comments about "tradition" and "how things are done". That moment helps define me as an anarcho-disillusionist, brought on by the anarcho-superstitionists who wanted me to accept some important tradition.

Years later in Tennessee, I attend rituals as part of other events to be supportive of the larger community of anarcho-freaks. At summer solstice 2002, again the directions are invoked. Again, West is called in as the spirit of water. I think about how badly we need rain—and when it comes, it will be drawn from the South. I stay silent in my objections, but cynically think how out of touch with reality the pagan religion is.

I know goddess worshippers call their paganism "spirituality" as distinguished from "religion." I find it hard to tell the difference. Both are caught up in gender duality: at the anarcho-summer solstice we are invited to paint our bodies blue for female energy and orange for male energy. Also, there is a pagan obsession with the notion of "mother earth" and "father sky". Wouldn't a liberating view of gender go beyond the simplistic imposition onto celestial bodies of traditional male/female roles?

Spirituality and religion are both married to order: we are instructed to enter the circle and walk clockwise, and anyone who accidentally or purposefully walks a different direction is coerced (in a sweet, hippie way, of course) into walking in the correct direction.

At the 1989 Anarchist gathering in San Francisco, I went to a workshop facilitated by Starhawk, author and anarcho-goddess, curious to see how radical rabble rousers interact with this star. Perched in the center, Starhawk invited people to share their thoughts and ideas. Person after person stood and spoke about how they felt spiritually deprived until they read Starhawk and found the goddess. Starhawk would smile and accept the accolades. I could not sit silent. I stood up and said that I felt trapped at a church gathering of born-again testimonials, not an anarchist gathering. Some people looked perplexed while others agreed with my sentiment.

Starhawk essentially said that she agreed this workshop was not about her but about all of us. Then the workshop continued as it had before, with the high priestess basking in the glory. I left at the break before the spiral dance. I had done one of those earlier that year at the Nevada Nuclear Weapons Test Site with her honor, and it had failed to stop the nuclear threat.

Spirituality is harmless fun, or is it? I believe there are greater forces out there than ourselves. I believe things sometimes happen in amazing, mysterious ways. But what scares me is the pull of religion, with its order, rituals, leaders, and peer pressure, which taken together seduces radical anarchists and creates an environment of repackaged religion under the guise of some supposedly liberating spirituality.

In July 2002, I stood in our vast garden. For weeks, rain came so close, but then just passed by. Thunder and lightning taunted, but failed to soak the soil. So I moved some hoses and turned on the nozzle again. The water is not the same as rain. I have read of studies that claim that rainwater is up to four times more effective for plants as water from a hose. The scientists have not been able to explain this, but I feel it and I smell it. Finally, the soaking rains came and we celebrated. And the plants grew at a faster rate than they had from irrigation. Though I have no idea why, I am a true believer. There is a force out there greater than us that we cannot understand. I don't need a religion to explain it.

Who will tell the people? An interview with David Rovics

by Witch Hazel

In mid October, I met up with radical songwriter David Rovics on the US Out of Colombia roadshow. He and his singing partner Allie Rosenblatt provided a musical backdrop to this powerful traveling presentation, which featured a descriptive slideshow and a talk by Colombian labor organizer William Mendoza.

David and Allie's new album "Hang a Flag in the Window" is filled with hard-hitting political tunes, interspersed with reflective ballads and funny story-songs. Check his website: www.davidrovics.com for upcoming tour dates and a bunch of MP3s of his songs, including some unrecorded.

WH: What is folk music?

DR: Ah, that's a juicy one. Originally it would be very broad—like anything that's not elite is "folk". If it's not "fine" it's "course". Y'know, if it's not a fine art then I guess it's folk art, so that would include anything basically other than classical music…Since the folk revival in the 60s—which was mainly white, middle class, urban people singing their own versions of primarily rural white and rural black traditional music—that is now the mainstream idea of folk music. So by the modern definition of folk music that's what I am, but I just don't like using the term cuz it's so narrow and excludes so much stuff that really is "music of the folk"—therefore folk music.

WH: What's "political" music?

DR: "Political music" simply means writing something "about the world". But if you write about anything other than heterosexual relationships, you're doing "political music" as defined by the music industry. But before the music industry and for most of the world still today, people write about all kinds of stuff. They write about what's going on around them. You'll find more political music at an open mic than you will coming out of say, Red House records, or some independent folk record label like that. The different labels of different kinds of music—that's an invention of the music industry. It used to be much more fluid, but now they funnel everything into market niches and standardize everything, so that basically the music industry has totally fucked up music as much as they possibly could. Anyone who sings about what's happening in the world is writing what they call "novelty songs." But if you look at traditional music before the time of the music industry you find that people write about everything: love, mine disasters, police brutality, going to war, getting shot, evil landlords, the theft of land. These things are age-old subjects…killing the king…

. . . just the act of a whole bunch of people singing together is really powerful

WH: What is your role as a political songwriter?

DR: When we say we're writing political songs, it's weird cuz that implies that the norm is apolitical. And that may be true—but only because of powerful forces in industry and government create that situation. As a musician, I play the same role musicians in political movements have played for, I dunno, thousands of years…all social movements have had music. For one, it's educational. It's also inspirational—to sing about things that are really depressing—people being killed and all kinds of horrible stuff, yet do it in a way that it can be funny, and inspirational, and that people can sing along to. Even if it's a depressing song with nothing really upbeat about it—just the act of a whole bunch of people singing together is really powerful.

WH: In what way…emotional?

DR: Yeah, emotionally. It helps them feel a sense of community…and we need a sense of community in order to have a movement. I'm totally convinced of that.

WH: Could you say something about any kind of controversy you've stirred up with your politics?

DR: First of all, I'm mostly singing for activist crowds, so people tend to agree with my politics before they hear the songs. When I sing in classrooms for students who might be more conservative or whatever, I find that people are rarely offended. A couple weeks ago, I played at a friend's class in Connecticut, and he had his students write evaluations of the performance and the talk. 28 of the 30 students had positive reactions

and had never heard folk music before and had never heard music with any kind of message. Most people in this country are not reactionaries; they're either progressive or ignorant. The ignorant are a vast majority, but I think ignorant people tend toward being progressive when given something to think about. They are mostly exposed to CNN, and—through no fault of their own—they don't know where to look for information. The ignorance is created by our culture.

"Who will tell the people/that free speech is a ruse?/The corporations run the country/and then they make the news/Is it media or mind control? heroic victories or crimes?/who will tell the people/that we're living in these times?" (from David's song "Who Will Tell the People?")

WH: Which issues have been the most controversial?

DR: 90 percent of the negative reaction I've ever gotten has been about my position on Israel, which is anti-Zionist. The other 10 percent has been around patriotism..specifically the flag. If it's not "Hang a Flag In the Window", it's "Flag Desecration Rag".

"Hang a flag In the window/All hail to the chief/Follow the leader and suspend your disbelief/My country right or wrong/You know what to do/Sing, "God Bless America"/That red, white and blue." (from the title song on David's new album)

WH: If you had to put a label on yourself politically, what would it be?

DR: I'm not sure…I would just refer to myself as a progressive, a leftist, a radical..a revolutionary—all pretty vague terms, and I like them because they're vague. Of course there's also terms I reject that are vague: like liberal, for example, and…

WH: Terrorist?

DR: (laughs) I like to sort of embrace the word terrorist just because it's one of these words that everyone's afraid of. "We're all terrorists"—everyone that doesn't like GW Bush is a terrorist by modern definition. Do I consider myself an anarchist or a socialist? I generally avoid either of those labels just cuz they've been so bastardized that nobody understands what they mean anymore. Plus, there's so many strains of anarchism and socialism—it's too easy to alienate anarchists by calling yourself a socialist, and vise-versa. And for what? I'd rather just explain my politics.

WH: Where did you get your political education?

DR: People, books and experiences…

WH: How and why did you start writing songs with a message?

DR: I had been exposed to Pete Seeger and various songwriters when I was a kid. Later in California I was actually exposed to Marxism and songwriting by David Kern. Then I got turned on to Phil Ochs, Woody Guthrie, Buffy St. Marie, Utah Phillips. When I went to Seattle I saw Jim Page play on the street and was blown away. When my housemate and friend was killed in SF, I started writing some songs that had more emotional depth to them, and less general "Capitalism Sucks" sentiment. They were more telling a certain story, which is generally more powerful and useful than broad condemnation type songs.

What turns me on the most is when people are joining what might be perceived as someone else's struggle . . .

WH: You've been kind of "summit hopping" for the past few years…what are your thoughts on the Global Justice Movement in Europe compared to here?

DR: I think the fundamental difference, is that in Europe there's a powerful union movement, and here…with some exceptions, the American union movement sucks. Compared to Europe the level of militancy here is barely worth mentioning. There are lots of good locals but the national leadership is some combination of incompetent and corrupt. What we saw in Seattle was just a glimpse of the kind of mass movement that goes on in European countries many times a year. They have protests much larger than that and as militant.

WH: What kinds of criticisms do you have of the movement in the US?

DR: Mostly I just appreciate anybody who's acting out of their best intentions and believes what they're doing is right . The biggest criticism I have is of all the people who aren't involved in it—of all the indifferent people who may know about what's happening but do not care to the degree that they're actually doing anything, other than being on Prozac or whatever. I wanna see those people stand up and do something. Having said that, I wish, for example that Mobilization for Global Justice would take a position on the bombing of Iraq. You can't oppose economic imperialism without opposing military imperialism. It's ridiculous—it's stupid. It makes no sense.

WH: What are some revolutionary movements in history that have inspired you most?

DR: Maybe I'm being a romantic, but what turns me on the most is when people are joining what might be perceived as someone else's struggle…like the St Patrick's Battalion, the International Brigades that went to Spain, the anti-fascists, the people that risked their lives to shelter Jews in Germany during the Holocaust…

WH: Solidarity?

DR: Solidarity. And also, the environmental movement—people who are willing to risk their lives to save a tree, which doesn't bear directly on their lives. It doesn't make a difference what happens to the forest as far as whether they can eat the next day...

WH: You made a whole album exclusively about 9-11. Is there any one song that you consider your best?

DR: Invariably it's the most recent one, so right now I really like "The Next Attack"…

WH: And what's that about?

DR: It goes into different reasons

why "the next attack" is in the CEOs' advantage to come, and why it's to Cheney's advantage, and also why the Afghan child whose parents were just killed would want the next attack to come, and just exploring that whole idea…

WH: A lot of people out there just find it all really confusing and overwhelming . . .

DR: The main contradiction before 9-11 and since 9-11 is still US imperialism. One of the biggest challenges in political songwriting is that you're stuck with images coming from the mass media, and then, you have to work with those images and give people something that makes sense. So, with, let's say "The Dying Firefighter," you're taking these quite effective images from the media about the heroism of these firefighters, and you can assume that people identify with these people, as I certainly did. Those images of people marching into burning buildings is powerful shit.

WH: The same thing holds true in "Jenin"—taking the perspective of the suicide bomber—a charged image—and not necessarily sympathizing with him in the song, but…

DR: It's not saying what he's doing is right, but it is sympathizing. It's saying, I acknowledge where you're coming from, and let me describe the circumstances that led you to such a…really, a logical decision. I mean, just the fact that these people are sacrificing their lives just to do something...is powerful. Besides what they're actually doing, they're giving everything they can possibly give for their cause…

WH: Which is a just cause …

DR: Which is a just cause …yeah.

WH: Do you have a critical perspective in terms of seeing it as religious fundamentalism?

DR: No, I think religious fundamentalism can be fueled through oppression and through dividing society into Muslims vs. everybody else, but I don't think the fundamental question is around religion—I think its around occupation, starvation, oppression—stuff like that.

WH: If you look at the IRA and then Hamas- completely different religions – it's oppression that fuels it.

DR: Yeah, same principle applies…

(later in the car)

WH: Do you feel like you have any anthems?

DR: Yeah I like writing songs with an anthemic quality. I guess you could say that "Hang a Flag in the Window" is sort of an anti-war anthem for the modern era..well, it might not be relevant for more than a little while…

WH: There's "Shut Them Down"

DR: Yeah, and "Glory and Fame", "Pray for the Dead"…"Kiss Behind the Barricades"

WH: What inspired that one?

DR: After Carlo Guiliani was killed, and Starhawk wrote a great piece about how important it is to stick together and take care of each other and have community. I thought it was an obvious point, but really important one; activists, especially in the anarchist scene can be like, 'I'm really tough' and 'nothing bothers me..I don't care about a little tear gas'. There's something good about that attitude, but also something destructive. We shouldn't pretend that these things can't cause physical and emotional trauma. Also, it's inspired by a photograph from 1968 Paris…the classic kiss behind the barricades…two students or young workers are both pulling their bandanas off their faces to have a quick kiss while hiding behind the barricades, before presumably going out to riot some more…I mean if you think of one photo that represents Paris '68 that would be it.

WH: ...a pretty romantic image. Do you see our struggle as romantic?

DR: Yeah, I think its really romantic cuz to me, what's most beautiful is struggle: it's people fighting for a better world. And, I guess being a fairly sex-positive person, what's really beautiful to me is physical affection, and sex, and love—people expressing their feelings for each other in different ways. And when that's combined, well jeez, it doesn't get any better than that…unless there's a few redwood trees around …(laughs)

WH: Which has happened…

DR: Yeah, they can all be combined . . . (laughs) I guess the most romantic possible thing must be eco-defense . . . because it combines love of natural beauty with love of humanity and each other . . . all together.

DAVID ROVICS. *Put a Flag in the Window*

CD— 21 songs
$15 from P.O. Box 995, Jamaica Plain, MA 02130

David's latest CD is a non-stop, searing political commentary that arrives in perfect timing to help foment resistance to the events of the day. Sarcastic anthems mingle with emotive, revolutionary ballads to deliver a potent impact. From 9-11, to Colombia, to the Israel-Palestine conflict, to pirate radio, Rovics gets down to the roots of the issues, consistently indicting US imperialism and resource-lust, and exposing covert military alliances around the globe.

I've heard it said that Rovics' albums are political commentary disguised as music, but in my mind, integrating these elements require unique skill and sensitivity. Having witnessed countless live performances of these songs, I have seen a rare emotional intensity exchanged between audience and stage that runs the gamut from exuberant sing-alongs to stunned silence. David Rovics is an artist and an educator, inspiring and provoking the kind of communal experiences that keep us struggling.

Peace Bikers Use Pedal Power to Shut Down the SOA

by sandorkraut

Three Tennessee activists bicycled back roads through Tennessee and Georgia for more than a week to join the annual demonstration to shut the School of the Americas (SOA), held in Columbus, Georgia, each November. The SOA is a U.S. government school dedicated to teaching Latin American military forces combat skills; thousands of its graduates have been implicated in horrific forms of state terrorism throughout Latin America. We biked 360 miles to the SOA from the neighboring queer communities where we live, IDA (MaxZine and TomFoolery) and Short Mountain Sanctuary (Sandorkraut) in middle Tennessee.

Our journey brought us through starkly contrasting environments and cultural milieus. Our first stop was Moonshadow, a family homestead, eco-education center, and community in Tennessee's Sequatchie Valley. In Rome, GA we were hosted by Matt and Amanda, friends we met at a demonstration in Oak Ridge. Out of their apartment, they have started a local Food Not Bombs, and they are active in the Coosa River Basin Initiative, a local group trying to clean up the river and its watershed area of PCBs released there decades ago by General Electric. It was inspiring to see young activists organizing and working in this small, conservative city, rather than fleeing to an already established activist scene.

We biked 360 miles to the SOA. Our journey brought us through starkly contrasting environments & cultural milieus

From Rome we continued south. As we approached Cedartown, we were greeted by a South African fellow named Grieger riding a handcycle (he had no legs). Grieger cycles fast, and competes in the Paralympics; it was not easy keeping up with him as he escorted us into town. Actually, he told us we deserved a police escort, but thankfully that never materialized.

That night we camped in a state park. Amidst thousands of acres, camping was restricted to a small area, complete with floodlights. Apart from us, this camping area was populated exclusively by huge RVs, each with a satellite dish and the sounds of television.

Everywhere we rode in Georgia we saw young pine forests, all one type of tree, all the same size. Where once wild, diverse ecosystems flourished, clearcutting has left a legacy of managed wood production areas. Another ubiquitous sight throughout the Georgia countryside, from Whitesville to Whitesburg, were signs with the Confederate flag and the words "let us vote." Our ride followed the election of Georgia's first Republican Governor since Reconstruction, his victory fueled by redneck outrage at the incumbent Democrat's modification of the state flag to de-emphasize the symbol of the Confederacy.

Though we met with much kindness and generosity everywhere we stopped, some drivers felt that we were asking too much to share the road with them. Many drivers impatiently honked at us, and one gave us the finger. Other folks we encountered were mystified and amused that anyone could travel like this.

The events at SOA were fun and uplifting. Friday night we attended a queer caucus, which made the folks who attended visible to one another, and we kept running into each other all weekend. At the Sunday demonstration, we were recruited into the Hott Block, with pink flags and hot pants. At the SOA gate, instead of angry or somber confrontation, the Hott Block sat on the ground and played spin the bottle, with each of us representing a nation. As Belarus, I actively modeled world peace and love by tenderly kissing the luscious lips of many other nation-states.

Our peace ride to the SOA was a bridge-building experience: Trannies, peace and solidarity activists, bikers, food activists, eco-activists, queers, and communitarians. Though diverse in focus, we are connected, in the margins of American life where our subcultures exist and thrive. Biking through strip malls, subdivisions, and clearcuts, we experienced plenty of despair. But the human connections we made as we rode reminded us that allies are everywhere.

BIKES NOT CARS!

CRITICAL MASS: Bicycling's Defiant Celebration
Edited by Chris Carlsson
AK Press, 2002, 256 pp. $18.95

review by MaxZine

Hop on a bike. Head downtown. Reclaim the streets. It is a critical mass of bicyclists boldly pedaling through public space with a festive challenge to car culture.

Critical Mass: Bicycling's Defiant Celebration, is a collection of articles, photos and graphics published on the occasion of the ten year anniversary of Critical Mass. CM started as a monthly group bicycle outing in San Francisco and has spread around the world. The breadth of writings show many reasons people participate in Critical Mass rides: adventure, community, to protest pollution, to challenge authority, and to demonstrate against wars for oil.

Critical Mass paints a feel for a ride. First-hand accounts of rides transport the reader to the pulse of the pavement. As co-founder Carlsson explains: "People arrive, excited to join a temporary, mobile occupying army of noisy rolling revelers, relishing the sounds of people laughing and talking, hooting and whistling, tinkling bells and spinning gears. You are invited to talk to strangers and they usually answer with sincere enthusiasm."

(continued on next page)

Printed Oddities & Human Curiosities: Revolt at 65 mph

by Okra P. Dingle

The Autonomadic Bookmobile is an independent press bookstore and Info-Shop on wheels. It has spent a good part of the last year touring the US, visiting over a hundred cities, covering over 50,000 miles. The Bookmobile supports small, independent and radical publishers of books, zines, newspapers and pamphlets, against the corporate hegemony on printed matter and ideas by chain bookstores and distributors.

Since 1994, the Bookmobile has traveled as a tabling project with the Bindlestiff Family Cirkus on their yearly national tours; in 2001, the Bookmobile expanded into its own project in the form of a brightly muraled, 15 foot box-truck painted by David Gassaway and friends, with built-in bookshelves stocked from Autonomedia, AK Press, Last gasp, RE/Search, See Sharp Press, Charles H. Kerr, as well as self-published books, zines and anti-authoritarian newspapers from around the country. The Bookmobile also carries an extensive reference collection of flyers and broadsheets about D.I.Y. projects, spaces and intentional communities across the country.

The Autonomadic Medicine Show, which accompanies the Bookmobile and is performed by its proprietors, Dr. Henceforth Flummox and Okra P. Dingle. The show draws on several traditions within the variety arts, including Circus, Sideshow, Cabaret, Vaudeville, and the old time purveyors of dubious cure-alls known as the Medicine Shows.

The Show currently presents such acts as the Human Pincushion, Broken Glass Walking, Psychic Surgery, Knife Throwing, the Human Blockhead, pyrotechnics, and accordion and musical saw playing. It's all presented with a vaudevillian, comic flair rather than the traditional gross-out show, with an eye towards minor disorientation to jolt the audience out of daily routine-bound thinking and into a sense of wonder.

Harkening back to when traveling entertainers were a primary source of information and culture in rural small town america, via itinerant pamphleteers, balladeers, Shakespearean orators, soapboxers, tent revivalists and mummers, the show is structured around the oratorical build up of each act. Viewers are engaged with anecdotes of Sideshow history and self-satirizing dissemblings with ridiculous premises before the actual demonstration of some skilled feat, many of which are revealed to be possible only with the help of selected books from inside the Bookmobile.

After the show, the public is invited to peruse the bookmobile, hopefully with a heightened frame of reference similar to what will be encountered in the literature inside.

Although the books provide a forum for Anarchist, Anti-Authoritarian and critical thinking, as well as underground and extreme culture, the Medicine Show consciously avoids overt proselytizing, relying instead on the straightforward presentation of classical variety acts with a surreal twist, leaving the viewers to draw their own conclusions.

Coming to an Infoshop Near You: **Drs. Flummox and Dingle of the Autono-Medicine Show!**

The Bookmobile and Medicine Show is perpetually broke and in debt, and seeking creative (non State-sourced) funding, benefits and tax free donations. The Bookmobile is always looking for consignments from independent publishers and zine writers.

Both Autonomedia and Bindlestiff Family Variety Arts have 501c3 status, and can accept tax-exempt donations for the Bookmobile. Mail correspondence can be sent to: Autonomadic Bookmobile, P.O. Box 2128, Stuyvesant Station, New York, New York, 10009.

E-mail us at: a_nomadic@yahoo.com and check out: www.autonomedia.org (click on BOOKMOBILE)

Critical Mass challenges car culture *(continued from previous page)*

The book makes clear that CM is first and foremost a celebration of cycling, but delivers a political message. "Bicitekas in Mexico City" explores a movement in 1989 to demand bicycle parking and bike lanes. "The Great Bicycle Protest of 1896" surveys a massive San Francisco bike protest for Good Roads, which ironically helped facilitate the building of the infrastructure for car culture. "Ride a Bike, Go to Jail!" shows how the police can react violently to bike protesters, as was the case at the 2000 Democratic National Convention in Los Angeles.

CM rides charm some and alienate others. *Critical Mass* contains numerous how-to pieces which include ways to safely guide rides and creative ways people have pursued their freedom to utilize our public spaces.

Although the repetition of many similar accounts of rides and viewpoints has a tendency to put the brakes on my reading enthusiasm, you can always turn the page and be delighted with a fabulous photo or funny flier. At its best, the book should inspire readers to start their car engines less frequently and put their legs in motion.

Letters to the Fifth Estate

FE Note: It looks like our last issue hit raw nerves not only in people we criticized, but even with those whom one of our authors defended and praised.

The following letters and responses include reactions to Pono Bonobo's statements about the nature of violence, Ellen Carryout's critical review of *Green Anarchy,* and Sunfrog's supportive review of CrimethInc.'s work and the refusal of Philadelphia's Wooden Shoe Books to carry one of their titles, *Evasion.*

Jump on for the ride on these and other issues and send in your opinion..

A Letter to the editors of *Fifth Estate,* courtesy of the CrimethInc. Anti-Squabbling Squad

Instead of an Angry Debate Between Entrenched Anarchists by someone with more interesting things to do than participate in another one!

"Just for the sake of argument—" I've just returned from the supermarket dumpster down the street, backpack full and graffiti pen empty, to a house from which CrimethInc. propaganda is distributed.

My friends look up from the piles of pamphlets and papers and posters they've been stuffing into boxes since morning, and cringe. "You know it's not going to be good," says the one with the beard, "when someone wants to talk 'for the sake of argument.'"

"Yeah," I allow, "that could have been an alternate title for that piece in the last *Harbinger,* 'Infighting the Good Fight.' All the same—I've been reading this piece in the new *Fifth Estate,* in which one Pono Bonobo endeavors to rescue pacifist anarchism as well as CrimethInc—whatever the term means in that context—from those indignant class war anarchists, and I've been wondering: in point of literal fact, can't one actually use the master's tools to dismantle his house?"

"Well, yes, you can," he rejoins—"but you can't use the master's tools to dismantle his tools."

"Fair enough—what are you supposed to dismantle his house with instead, I wonder?"

"We've all been trying to figure that one out," laughs the one with the pigtails, folding a poster around a book. "I guess it's OK for everyone to try different things, so long as the house ends up dismantled and the tools in the ground."

Fifth Estate Letters Policy

We welcome letters commenting on our articles, ones stating opinions, or reports from your area. We can't print every letter we receive, but each is read by our staff and considered for publication.

Letters via email or on disk are appreciated, but type- or hand-written ones are acceptable. Length should not exceed two, double spaced pages. If you are interested in writing a longer response, please contact us.

Send to POB 6, Liberty TN 37095, or via electronic mail to fifthestatenewspaper@yahoo.com.

"Yeah . . ." I'm unloading perfectly good bananas and mangos, as two of them seal up a huge package to Puerto Rico. "Bonobo and this 'Ashen Ruins' person on the internet have been hashing it out over which approach, violent direct action or nonviolent stuff like naked marching, is more appealing to the masses and so on, but I don't personally see why we can't have a movement with a place for both, in which they complement each other."

"I've found both rewarding and effective, at different times," offers my pigtailed friend, as she reaches for the tape.

"Some people are going to gravitate to one, and some the other, anyway—why not accept that and focus on how to integrate the two?" Beneath the bananas are big bags of salad greens. "And that brings me to my other question: I appreciate the editor's gesture of solidarity in rebuking anarchists who attack our projects, but I'm not sure if I think it's a good thing. I mean, it feels good for my ego, but that's usually a sign that something's dangerous."

"If we're being defended on the same grounds as we're being attacked, it's not so good," suggests a fourth voice. "Contrary to some charges, I don't see us as being 'lifestylist' at all—I've never seen anything with the CrimethInc. name on it urging people to 'drop out until the system collapses.' We've published stuff about some ways people from the more privileged classes can survive without working, but I always thought the idea was to use that liberated space to wage war for everyone's liberation. Revolution has to happen, somehow, and to have time to work on it, some of us will have to get our lives out of the work economy." She goes back to answering a letter.

"What's this 'we,' white man?" jokes back at her the smiling woman at the computer, deleting the orders for free papers that have been packaged this evening.

"The way I see it," the bearded one begins again, hefting a bundle of tabloids, "the last thing we need is to be defended from our critics in the anarchist community. First off, if we're serious about focusing our energies outwards, to those who could be involved in this struggle but aren't yet"—he takes a marker and begins addressing a box to a kid in Texas—"rather than inwards, for more struggling of anarchist against anarchist, then it just perpetuates the internal conflicts for other parties to take sides.

"Clarifications of misunderstandings, apologies for mistakes, those things we need; more bad energy, more battles between egos, we don't. Second, I wonder if it's occurred to the people at *Fifth Estate* that we might not mind these attacks—maybe it's our role to say and be things that are unpopular. Maybe for some, we can be most helpful as an enemy, something to rebel or react against."

The woman looks up from the computer again, more serious. "It seems to me that we actually have a symbiotic relationship with the class war anarchists. Their diatribes can serve to bring the same things we're talking about down to earth—I've learned things from them before. And, especially if someone *does* misunderstand our efforts as 'lifestylist,' that critique needs to be there to clarify what our literature did not.

"Our tactics don't and shouldn't work for everyone, and the Class Warriors are there to provide an alternative—viciously attacking us in print is just their way to let the world know it, and responding with

insults of our own wouldn't improve anything. It's not like they interfere with our activities in practice."

"Yeah, the last place *Evasion* needs to be is the Wooden Shoe bookstore," agrees the pigtailed one. "Everyone shopping there already has points of entry for other approaches to radical organizing and living."

I'm finally unloading the potatoes at the bottom of my pack: the class warriors are right, we can only hope, that we scavengers will have to find other sources of food once the revolution comes; but for the time being it's sad and absurd that they aren't here to help us share this vast bounty with hungry families around town.

"If anything, I'm annoyed by the way our anarchist critics all seem to read the texts so carelessly—like in that piece on the internet: 'Flipping through their first book speaks volumes,' or the other guy who brags that all he has to do is judge our book by its cover. I'll quote that Zapatista letter to *Green Anarchy*"—I rummage through the 'zine rack and find the issue—"here it is: *'If these "critiques" had included a detailed discussion on our tactics with reference to our history and current positions in the world, it wouldn't have been a big deal, nothing that we don't do constantly within our own organizations.'* Without that, it just seems like they're looking to make enemies."

"But that's just my point," replies my bearded companion. "As long as we are getting that kind of constructive critique from some, we don't need every anarchist to read our work thoroughly, let alone praise it. We have to keep our eyes on the prize, as it were—keep focused on getting useful resources out to people not already involved in any anarchist community. That's the project we've taken on in this house, at least, right?"

He gets a can of spray paint out to test a new stencil. "Anyway, that's why I wish our comrades at *Fifth Estate,* being well-versed in our materials and what *has* worked in our tactics to date, would focus on pointing out ways we can improve. We don't need defenders—or advertisers, at this point. We need insightful, creative critics."

"The would-be revolutionary seeks criticism, above all—she relies upon this to hone her strategies, to learn from others' perspectives, to maintain her humility. She knows that evaluations of her efforts are of the utmost value to everyone involved in the revolutionary project, and so she is the first to insist that these efforts are far from perfect.

"The most effective way to undermine her work is with unconstructive criticism. Harried by idle faultfinding, name-calling, petty attacks and personal vendettas, she eventually becomes deaf to all feedback—and thus frozen, neutralized.

Trust that your comrades are sincere about changing the world, whatever your differences, and approach them with input as gently and supportively as you can. We're going to win this revolution, sooner or later, so there's no sense in taking out our frustrations on each other—but we're only going to win it together. Save the offensive for your true enemies—the ones with whom discussion can solve nothing."

—Text from the poster, POINT YOUR GUNS IN THE RIGHT DIRECTION, available at www.crimethinc.com or from CrimethInc. Anti-Sectarian Sect, P.O. Box 1963, Olympia, WA 98507, U.S.A.

Out to Lunch

To the Fifth Estate:

To the question of the supposedly inherent authoritarianism of violence, I am lost trying to follow the logic of such a statement.

Would Bonobo call a slave revolting against her condition by killing her master "inherently authoritarian?" What about a villager killing soldiers massacring his family? Crazy Horse vs. General Custer? You get the picture.

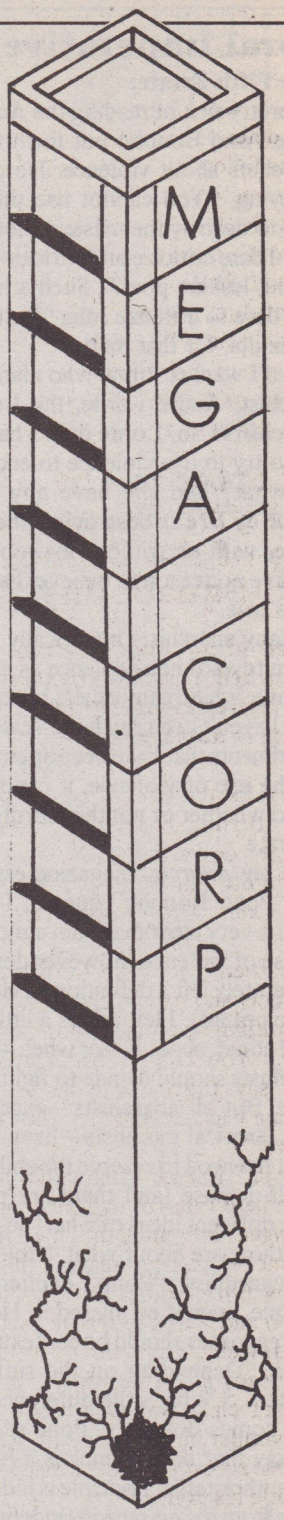
It seems that a violent act against one who holds power over you simply rights the balance, if even momentarily. This method may not elevate us to any moral high ground, but in the context of fighting an oppressive force, it is always an act of self-defense.

The horrific use of violence by the state reflects its use in that context only. Unlike industrial technology, violence is neutral. I challenge the assumption that violence is "inherently" *anything* but a *fact of life*, and an indispensable force in nature.

The incomprehensible rationale behind the claim, "the way of the wolf is not the way of the hunter," makes me wonder if Ellen Carryout was out to lunch during her elementary school science classes. Not only do all wild animals (and wild humans) often utilize violent actions to defend themselves and their loved ones, but they also use intimidation, and "posturing" in their strategy for self-defense. These postures, or "chain rattling," as Carryout labeled the anarchist equivalent, always precede any real defensive attack, and they are often enough to pre-empt one.

To live by the principle of nonviolence as an outgrowth of anarchist beliefs (and try to convince anarchists that violence is inherently authoritarian), is in my opinion a limited (and yes, privileged) interpretation of anarchist philosophy. This perspective is based on a denial of what I see as a useful, natural instinct that can in many instances help us secure our future survival.

In defense of "chain rattling,"
Terra, Ashville, N. Carolina



—Gary Erwin

Moral Imperative

Dear Fifth Estate:

I'm pretty sick of reading the Audre Lorde quote Pono Bonobo put forth to support his beliefs about violence. He quotes her as saying, "You cannot use the master's tools to destroy the master's house." Who would dare criticize an "African-American, radical, lesbian poet?" Such a boor might even dare to criticize Julia "Butterfly" Hill or Gandhi, for that matter.

But I want to know who made the non-anarchist, Audre Lorde, the Lord of the Anarchists? So, Lorde didn't have the desire to try to use violence to end violence. So, what? Did she have any successes (small or large) destroying the master's house, with or without his tools? If not, we have no reason to believe that her pithy line is true.

Many anarchists historically have been drawn toward non-violence as a moral imperative, while many others have not. Since there haven't been any large-scale anarchist experiments that have been attempted *without* the use of violence, it can't be determined whether or not this Lordly maxim is accurate.

In my *Anarchy* magazine essay/primer that "Pono Bonobo" quotes, I thought I made it very clear that I am agnostic about the use of violence (however described—I deliberately left a definition of violence out of the primer). I left things a little ambiguous, I admit, about if—or when—individual anarchists should decide to fight back with force. But all anarchists—except for the most fanatical moralists—have been clear about the need to reserve the ability to fight in self-defense (and there are perhaps as many different ideas of what "self-defense" is as there are about what "violence" is).

Regardless, "Pono" explicitly agrees with me, even if he missed it. He says, ". . .our responses should be contextual," while I said, "Depending on the situation, we decide. . ." What's the difference?

It comes down to "Pono's" assertion: "To say that nonviolence is a [sic] not an anti-authoritarian principle is indefensible." Aside from the extraneous indefinite article, this sentence contains too many negative convolutions to make real sense. Clearly, he disagrees with me when I declare that non-violence is a tactic, not a principle. But he hasn't challenged my opinion; he has only attempted to dismiss it. So, my response, along the exact same lines is: Oh, yeah?

As I said in my primer: "principles. . .are perspectives and practices that are not negotiable; they are the foundational definitions that make [anarchist] philosophy distinct from others." What I was attempting in my primer was to outline anarchist principles that *all* anarchists—regardless of their particular views on economics, organizational forms, etc.—could agree on.

I do not deny that the issue of violence is thorny, but like the question of collectivism versus communism or federations versus networks, it is one that is open for discussion. Only the most ridiculously dogmatic sectarians think that their own perspective is the only true authentic one.

I explained my understanding of what positive anarchist principles are based on my study of anarchist history and my own 20-plus years of involvement: direct action, mutual aid, and voluntary cooperation. All anarchists have agreed that these are non-negotiable.

The Anarchist FAQ "Pono" quotes from the internet, while remarkable for its lack of sectarianism, certainly can't be used as the final arbiter of what all anarchists can or should agree on. Further, their Malatesta quote is pretty misleading.

In 1921 the Italian anarchist wrote, "For two people to live in peace, both must want peace; if one of them insists on using force to oblige the other to work for him and serve him, then the other, if he wishes to retain his dignity as a [hu]man and not be reduced to abject slavery, will be obliged, in spite of his love of peace, to resist force with adequate means."

That the quotation from the FAQ is misleading is due to them not printing the entire paragraph: "We are on principle opposed to violence and for this reason wish that the social struggle should be conducted as humanely as possible [end of the FAQ quote]. But this does not mean that we would wish it to be less determined, less thoroughgoing; indeed we are of the opinion that in the long run half-measures only indefinitely prolong the struggle, neutralizing it as well as encouraging more of the kind of violence which one wishes to avoid. Neither does it mean that we limit the right of self-defense to resistance against actual and imminent attack. For us the oppressed are always in a state of legitimate defense and are fully justified in rising without waiting to be actually fired on; and we are fully aware of the fact that attack is often the best means of defense…" (from *Malatesta: Life & Ideas*, translated and edited by Vernon Richards).

My primer was not a call for [Ward] Churchillian street fighting—indeed it's quite the opposite. Professor Churchill's hopelessly flawed *Pacifism as Pathology* is merely a long-winded apologia for the good old days of Weathermanesque urban guerrillaism, a tactic that I find self-defeating and self-destructive.

"Pono" uses a neat—but transparent—trick: he makes all of his non-pacifist opponents into supporters of Churchill. Some may be, but how can he conclude from my primer—or anything else I've written—that I am? Churchill is certainly no anarchist, but neither was Lorde, and even if they were, I see no reason to abide by the slogans or ideologies of one or the other.

For anarchy,
Lawrence Jarach
P.O. Box 508
Berkeley CA 94701-0508

DON'T LOSE THE FIFTH ESTATE
If you move without notifying us directly, you miss your next issue. Even if you file an address change with the Post Office they will not forward Periodicals mail. Please write before moving and include your old address and zip code. Thanks.

FE: Tamed Version

To the Fifth Estate:

There's an irony when the ideology of one's opponent can be so easily exposed while one's own isn't copped to. Three times, Ellen Carryout's hostile review of *Green Anarchy* labels *GA* ideological, as if the current pacifist party line of *Fifth Estate* is somehow exempt from such a category. [See Fall *FE*, "How Green is Green *Anarchy.*"]

In the 1980s, *FE* opened up new horizons of critical thought exploring the depth of civilization, technology, and the nature of a totalizing crisis taking shape at all levels. The most stimulating anti-authoritarian discussions in English took place in its pages, in my opinion. But after about 15 years of slippage, what remains is a thin, bohemian effort that is utterly lacking in radical depth.

One might think that the rapid degeneration globally underway, including the self-destructive nature of mass society and its technology and the ecocidal descent of the biosphere itself, would be a spur to deepening approaches to resistance. Sadly, the reverse is so in the case of *FE*.

The zine boasts an open, libratory style, but to me it mainly comes across as that of sanctimonious hippies with just about zero interest in fighting the cancer of technology and capital that is devouring life ev-

erywhere.

Any and all forms of "violence" are condemned. I wonder if this applies, however, to folks everywhere—people defending their indigenous cultures, for example? *Fifth Estate* is now so weak as to avoid even defending property damage as a tactic.

I have a vivid memory of the first major anti-Viet Nam war protest that may be pertinent here. It was 1965 Berkeley and thousands thronged Telegraph Avenue in a huge and dramatic evening march. Our plan was to proceed to the Oakland army base, and disrupt its functioning as a main depot for supplies to SE Asia.

As the march proceeded, we could see massed ranks of riot police at the Berkeley/Oakland boundary. In short, we were deterred by this barrier and the protest ended. The next day, various commentators applauded our "good sense," and observed that because violence was avoided, 'wiser heads prevailed."

But within six months, the U.S. government had decided upon total war in Viet Nam. They apparently saw that protests would remain peaceful and symbolic, that there would be no real opposition. Ten years later, about three million Asians had been killed. It is at least possible that the masters of war would have thought twice if we'd been stronger that evening in Berkeley?

We at *Green Anarchy* in no way make a fetish of any kind of violence. We do see the blizzard of violence in every sphere, and attempt in theory and practice to be part of what it will take to put an end to a monstrous set-up that generates the violence.

Meanwhile, *FE* seems to have become part of the liberal chorus that denounces anyone who has the courage to fight. I frankly never thought that even several years of decline could produce such a sorry, tamed vision of what was once so vibrant.

John Zerzan
Eugene, Ore.

David Watson responds: According to JZ, after a period in the 1980s when this paper produced "the most stimulating anti-authoritarian discussions in English" (that is, when JZ was printed regularly in it), it has declined for about fifteen years.

In fact, in 1981 he was saying the same things about the *FE* he is now. For example, in a letter in the November 1981 issue, he chastised the *FE* for its "defeated spirit." The paper was "academic ... a banality," giving a sense of "a profound indictment minus any everyday applications." Even the call in the previous edition for "a defense of every little community," he insisted, was "merely reformist."

There's no pleasing this guy. In any event, he now apparently approves of the defense of little communities—as long as their means of defense are neither symbolic nor non-violent. I am sure they'll appreciate hearing it.

Zerzan accuses the *FE* of having a pacifist party line because a couple of writers in these pages criticized hyper-militancy and the glamorization of violence. Unlike JZ, the writer of the review in question gave some examples—the prominent adulation in *Green Anarchist* of the hapless Kaczynski's anomic violence, and the printing of Ward Churchill's repugnant cheerleading for the massacre at the Trade Towers, in which self-appointed executioners, carrying out the *fatwah* of a fascist cult, blithely dispatched some three thousand people to the other world. Instead of responding, Zerzan insists that "we at *GA*" do not fetishize violence (ironic how he accuses the *FE* of a "party line" while himself employing the royal we). But he suggests by his silence that Kaczynski and Al Qaeda represent such "deepening approaches to resistance."

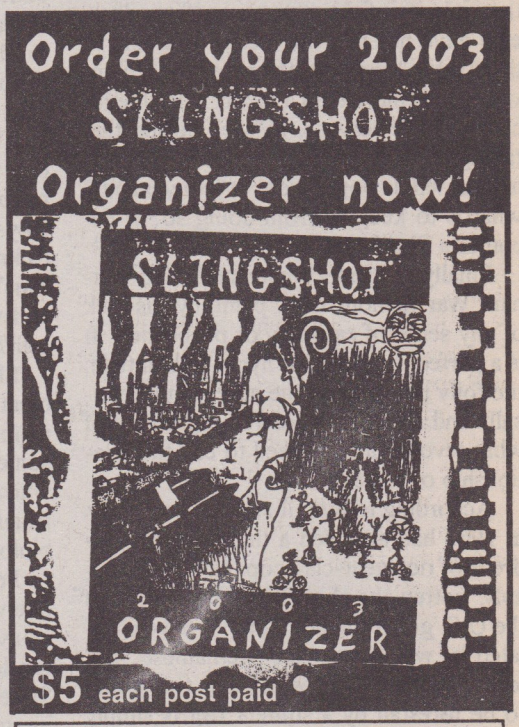
In fact, as anyone who has read the paper well knows, the *FE* has a long tradition, stretching back to the late 1970s, of critiquing the foibles of hyper-militancy and the cult of violence, alongside a deep skepticism about reflexive and dogmatic pacifist strategies.

That said, I will put in my two cents here about the non/violence discussion. I think that Pono Bonono's article was thoughtful and worthy of discussion, even if I did not agree with everything in it. I hope it generates real discussion and not this kind of one-dimensional posturing. There is an admirable pacifist current in and alongside anarchism that needs to be acknowledged. None of us has the keys to the kingdom. Broadly speaking, neither violence nor non-violence has turned back the megamachine. I am not a pacifist, but I have seen plenty of creative, powerful pacifist activism—including from the folks in Tennessee now running the *FE*—that not only keeps me from passing judgment, but that inspires me. Kaczynski's self-justifying "hitting where it hurts" is, in contrast, pathetic, its reasoning brutish.

As for me, I support mass civil and uncivil resistance, including creative non-violence, and I think most other anarchists do, too. I agree with Pono's quite sensible assertion that violence and hyper-militancy "can often be counterproductive, alienating people and giving the state an excuse to repress both the anarchist movement and popular movements for social change," and I urge *GA* and others to take this reality seriously.

Furthermore, I consider non-violence a central principle in the anarchist ethos and vision of the free and cooperative society we propose, and I practice it both in my activism and in my personal relations in daily life. It is a principle, but not a dogma. Beyond that, I believe that all of us have not merely the right but the obligation to defend ourselves by (almost) any means necessary.

What do I mean by modifying this famous line? In the last issue Lawrence Jarach is quoted as saying that non-violence is not a principle but merely "a tactic." According to Jarach, "Depending on the situation, we decide when it's convenient—or not—to adhere to non-violent guidelines. . . Morality plays no part in deciding what tactics to use in a given situation; it only mat-



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ters what is compatible with our strategy and principles."

I agree in part with what Jarach is saying, I think context matters, and I think it imperative to judge differently the violence of the oppressor and the violence of the oppressed. Nevertheless, this formulation is dangerous unless it includes a recognition of the intimate relationship between means and ends. Without some clear statement of one's moral or ethical criteria, it is a classic nihilist position (and I mean classic in the sense of the kinds of nineteenth century nihilists described in Dostoevsky's *The Possessed*, which radicals would do well to read.)

Turning questions of morals, of life and death, ends and means into mere expediencies, it borders, in its ambiguity, on becoming an apology for almost anything—including such acts as the Japanese Aum cult's poisoning of subways, the Oklahoma City bombing, and Ted K's cheerful planting of bombs on airliners, acts which were extolled by *GA's* comrades in England as something like, if I may borrow from Zerzan, "deepening approaches to resistance." Al Qaeda has constructed an entire theology around this notion.

Ethically, the idea that everything is permissible to the oppressed is symmetrical to the violence of the state, even if its adherents have not had the means available to the state to carry out their "tactics." Nonviolence is more than a tactic. It is an ethical value. Otherwise, if "we" decide that taking hostages, killing innocents, or wiping out whole populations is "convenient," what is to keep us from doing so? It becomes a free-for-all.

Finally, Zerzan's comment on the Vietnam War demonstrates painfully his lack of any sense of causality or proportion. It is a perfect example of hyper-militantism: the folly that upping the ante is automatically and always the answer, regardless of what revolutionaries used to call the relationship of forces.

According to him, if student protesters in 1965 had attacked a thick line of hundreds of riot-gear-clad cops (and, presumably, gotten the shit kicked out of them) the U.S. government might not have escalated its war against the Vietnamese. The idea that the U.S. government was going to be forestall by a student riot is simply preposterous. It would take much more suffering and blood, and the near collapse of the U.S. armed forces, before they turned back.

Zerzan should read Sun Tzu on the art of war. The reality is that the Berkeley march was a signal event early in the antiwar movement that inspired people all over the country, sparking a dramatic expansion of antiwar activism.

It did so at least in part because it confronted authority to the extent possible without being suicidal. Thus Zerzan, characteristically, turns a triumph into a defeat.

Who Is A Jew?

To the Fifth Estate:

Some of the issues raised in your last edition's two articles about the current situation in Israel/Palestine and the introduction trouble me. There are plenty of myths surrounding the conflict, and the creation and perpetuation of counter-myths don't help to clarify things.

Counter-myth #1: Israel is "an invader/settler nation."

There has been a continual and documented Jewish presence in Judea/Palestine since well before the Roman invasion, up through the time of the Zionist enterprise. Indeed, for almost all of the nineteenth century, Jerusalem had a majority Jewish population. The attempt to write these Jews out of history as numerically or politically insignificant is as racist as the Zionist attempt to deny the continual presence and distinct cultural and political aspirations of non-Jewish Palestinians.

Counter-myth #2: Criticisms of Israel coming from "Jewish Americans" (because they are Jewish) have more credibility.

The corollary to this is the idea that not only will someone who identifies as Jewish not be prone to anti-Semitism, but also that they will be exemplary as Jews. What I want to know is this: Do these "Jewish Americans" identify themselves as Jews in a context where their criticisms of Jews are absent?

Should anarchist Jews allow the Rabbinate to determine who is a Jew? To the majority of Rabbinical authorities, a Jew is someone born to a Jewish mother or one who has converted according to prescribed rituals. To the Rabbis, the issue is mostly biological.

For anti-Semites, it's all biological: anyone with a Jewish ancestor is Jewish—the equivalent of the "single drop of blood" rule for determining who is Black in the United States. As an anarchist and a Jew, I'm not interested in allowing the racists and the Rabbis the exclusive ability to determine who is or isn't a Jew.

To me, it's much more relevant to determine "who is a Jew?" the way we determinine "who is an anarchist?" Does the person act like an anarchist, attempting to live according to anarchist principles?

Similarly, does the person act like a Jew, attempting to live according to self-defined principles like honoring learning, having ethical standards, having some kind of engaged relationship with Jewish traditions, history, and culture?

When was the last time [Fifth Estate writers] ronni k. or Unrulee celebrated a Jewish holiday? Do either of them keep kosher? When was the last time one of them studied some Jewish history or went to their local Jewish community center or a synagogue? If they have not done anything to make themselves known as fellow Jews in their local Jewish communities, I would say that they are hardly the ones to hold up as credible Jewish (rather than American) critics of the state of Israel.

In ronni's rush to lay all blame for the plight of the Palestinian refugees on the doorstep of the State of Israel the colonial domination of Gaza by Egypt and the annexation of the West Bank by Jordan starting in 1949 are (typically) ignored. At least the Jordanians offered Jordanian citizenship to thousands of refugees, unlike any other country in the region.

The existence of refugee camps is as much the fault of the governments of Jordan, Egypt, Lebanon, Syria (and the United Nations) as it is of Israel. The Israeli government must take the blame for the expulsion and dispossession of the hundreds of thousands of refugees between '47 and '49, but they were not the only state responsible for the lack of interest in the situation of the Palestinians between '48 and '67. They inherited that problem when they conquered the West Bank and Gaza.

Ronni is right that the issue is power and land. Unfortunately, all too often the anti-imperialist impulse devolves into anti-Semitism. Anti-imperialists, like the former leader of Fatah, Abu Iyad (whom ronni quotes approvingly), pay lip service to being ready to defend oppressed Jews, but they bristle at the thought of Jewish sovereignty. Jews in control of their own state, the army? That goes against the history of Jews as second-and-third-class citizens—when they were allowed to be citizens at all. Anti-Semites and anti-imperialists like their Jews weak and powerless.

That there are Israeli projects of active dissent and refusal (B'Tselem, Ta'ayush, and Gush Shalom for example) is a healthy sign pointing to a shift away from a blanket acceptance of the expansionism, colonialism, and brutality that has come to characterize not just the occupation, but all of Israeli society. It's too bad that we hear so

few Palestinian voices refusing the cult of the *shahid* ("martyr"), refusing the anti-Semitic suicide bombings, refusing the obscurantism and nascent clerical fascism of Hamas and Islamic Jihad.

In Solidarity,
Charles Boles

E.B. Maple responds: I have no idea whether the *FE* authors he mentions keep kosher (I doubt it), but their ethnic heritage certainly would have been enough to get them exterminated in Europe 60 years ago.

As to the question, "who is a Jew?" who cares other than anti-Semites and those Jews who see the world through a prism of ethnicity, something I would think is incompatible with the internationalism of anarchism. Are there anarchists asking, "Who is an Italian or a Scot?"

According to a Boles, people can be defined as Jews by their "attempting to live according to self-defined Jewish principles like ... having ethical standards" and, apparently by keeping kosher. So, seemingly, on the first count, this would exclude Ariel Sharon, Meyer Lansky, Ze'ev Jabotinsky, and Son of Sam, but if they observe the Judaic dietary laws, where does this leave them?

On the other hand, Martin Luther King, Jr., Mahatma Gandhi, and Eugene V. Debs meet the first criterion, but fail on the second. What Boles is suggesting is pure ethnic, religio-nationalism, unworthy of anyone calling himself or herself an anarchist.

I think a better question would be why someone who identifies with the anarchist tradition takes the time to author a convoluted defense of a nasty little nation state. Regarding the introduction, which I wrote, the operative word in the phrase Boles objects to is "nation."

This doesn't refer to the relatively small number of Jews who lived in Palestine prior to the 1948 establishment of a religiously-based, exclusivist state established by European invaders that gained its territory by ethnically cleansing the land of its prior inhabitants in the identical manner which occurred in North America, Australia and South Africa.

Israel has little or nothing to recommend it over a world of other nation states. Given the nature of its origins, its theocratic government and laws, the role it plays as cat's paw for U.S. imperialism, and its current murderous stance toward its remaining victims, it is astounding that an anarchist would find any place for sympathetic attachment to it.

That bordering Arab states have manipulated the issue of Palestinian refugees is mostly true, but Boles's statements beg the question of why there are refugees in the first place. Bristle at Jewish sovereignty, a Jewish army, a Jewish state? Try substituting white or Christian and see how that rings No anarchist admires an army or state of any sort, let alone one with a religious definition.

"It's too bad," he says, that there isn't a more acceptable (to him) response from a sector of the Palestinians who employ assaults on civilians as a tactic. Well, gee, oppressed, desperate people do the darnest things, don't they?

When the consequences and intent of the European invasion on this continent became clear to North American Indians, some of them massacred unarmed men, women and children, burned their settlements, and attacked their wagon trains. They were reviled then as "savages" for their brutality and their wanton assaults, but as it turns out, everything they feared which led them to their acts, came true.

Given the nature of Israel's origins, its theocratic government and laws, the role it plays as cat's paw for U.S. imperialism, and its current murderous stance toward its remaining victims, it is astounding that an anarchist would find any place for sympathetic attachment to it.

Palestinian civilian deaths at the hands of Israel state terror, including 300 hundred children (oh, I know, they were throwing stones at tanks), is triple that which the Israelis have experienced. "It's too bad" that so few Israeli citizens refuse to cease acting out the logic of their country's origins, which have put Jews in as much peril as they were before the Holocaust.

Expose the Nature

Dear FE Collective:

Just getting to the Fall issue of the *FE*. I like the new format, and this may be the best issue I've seen.

I can't agree with the criticism of the *Alternative Press Review* publishing Milosevic's rants. [see "Milosevic "Crucified": Counter-Spin as Useful Idiocy] The words and themes speak for themselves, and expose the nature of the writer.

I'm all for allowing a soapbox for our enemies to speak from—showing clearly the content of their hearts and minds. These revelations can highlight the chinks in their armor. I certainly don't fear that the words of tyrants will convert people to their cause unless they were predisposed to those ideas anyhow.

Garry Erwin
Attica, N.Y.

David Watson responds: I am not in principle opposed to printing the words of mass murderers, fascists and tyrants if they do in fact enlighten us about the nature of mass murder, fascism and tyranny. But that is not what *The Alternative Press Review* did; they printed Slobodan Milosevic's ravings along with a leftist diatribe with the explicit claim that the mass murderer's legalistic denials and the appalling leftist drivel would illuminate the machinations of the Western powers.

That is patently fallacious, and confusing to people who are already quite confused about the issue of the Balkans. Sadly, the themes do not speak for themselves, and that is why there is so much utter confusion on the left and even among anarchists about the Yugoslav wars of dissolution and the Western intervention.

Not only have the *APR* editors so far refused even to respond to the issue of misinformation in their coverage, at least one of them, Tom Wheeler, continues to disseminate this material, and what are little more than apologetics for the genocide, on his email list. Perhaps they think that if they simply repeat them enough times, their fables will come true.

A friend, the editor of a decent left magazine I shall not mention by name, wrote to me that he thought my article was good, but that one could spend one's life responding to the idiocies of the left—implying that such endeavors are not the best way to spend one's energy. He has a point; but by not addressing these idiocies explicitly, which I think has largely been the case with his magazine, and too many others, one plays a role, indirect perhaps, but nevertheless significant, in perpetuating lies and genocide denial.

One tends to feel more or less strongly about this issue depending on how much one knows about the Balkan wars, and on how much one happens to care about Bosnia and the other victims of Milosevic's ethnofascist vortex. I happen to care quite a lot, and so I don't want to condone lies. *APR's* inhumane, bungling "counter-spin" was shameful.

Beyond panic, controversy, & taboo: Levine's enlightened look at kids & sex

Harmful to Minors: The Perils of Protecting Children from Sex. Judith Levine. University of Minnesota Press, 2002.

Review by Sarah White

Before Judith Levine's *Harmful to Minors: The Perils of Protecting Children from Sex* (2002) was even published, many people were out in force condemning the book. Minnesota House Majority Leader and Republican gubernatorial candidate Tim Pawlenty called the book "trash." E-mails and phone calls to the University of Minnesota Press admonished the publishers to "burn in hell." Neither considerations of free speech nor the fact that Pawlenty and other critics had read only a couple of chapter excerpts restrained them from pressuring U of M Press to stop publication. The Press continued with publication, but the University of Minnesota, which provides less than six percent of the Press' funding, initiated an external review of the Press to evaluate its publishing criteria.

So what prompted all the controversy? Levine writes that sex between an adult and a minor is not always harmful to the minor. She specifies that nonconsensual sex is harmful no matter who is involved, but she questions the notion that minors do not have the ability to consent to sexual relations with adults. Levine supports her question with research, just as she supports all the issues raised in *Harmful* with research. Levine neither ignores age-related power imbalances nor claims that all adult-minor relationships are healthy. This is just one issue that she raises among many, yet the eager censors swarmed around the topic of adult-minor relationships.

Some reviews suggested that people might be especially sensitive to the topic because of the recent child sex abuse cases in the Catholic church. However, these abusive situations make it all the more important to publish a book like Harmful to Minors. Levine points out that people in the USA talk less openly about sexuality—especially the sexuality of minors—as compared to other western cultures. Fear motivates much of the discourse around sexuality. Levine's book helps deconstruct these fears and gives us coordinates for more enlightened discussions. If *Harmful* is able to prompt conversations about sexuality—its positives and negatives—children who are sexually abused would be more apt to tell someone thereby preventing future child abuse cases.

Levine cites studies showing that education about sexuality that includes accurate information about pregnancy and disease prevention reduces the number of unwanted pregnancies and diseases. She explicitly details the need for this more comprehensive sexuality education as an alternative to the predominantly abstinence-only climate. Unfortunately, those youth who enroll in abstinence-only programs either do not learn about methods of protection or only learn the reasons why these methods do not work. Therefore, when they do become sexually active (and studies show that they do so only months later than their abstinence-plus educated peers) they have higher incidence of pregnancy and disease because of their lack of accurate knowledge about prevention.

Levine addresses what other discussions on child sexuality don't: sex can be fun and pleasurable. However, when this missing discourse of desire is broached, it is usually within the context of male desire being forced upon an unwilling or innocent female. Levine maintains that this masculinist paradigm is problematic for a variety of reasons. First of all, it limits male desire to power and aggression to be used against women as opposed to a desire of pleasure for both himself and his partner. It also relegates female desire to the stereotype of the virgin/whore dichotomy. This aspect of desire is related to some of the controversy about adult-minor sexual relations: "statutory rape is not about sex the victim says she did not want," explains Levine. But rather, "It is about sex she did want but which adults believe she only thought she wanted because she wasn't old enough to know she did not want it."

Levine addresses what other discussions on child sexuality don't: sex can be fun and pleasurable.

Harmful to Minors is structured with two main sections. In the first, "Harmful Protection," Levine offers information to understand and analyze the fears that promote censorship, "pedophile panics," and the "gradual pathologizing of normative children's sexuality." She chronicles the shift to the right that has resulted in the abstinence-only movement, the absence of abortion within "the discourse of teen sex," and the understanding of sex as synonymous with heterosexual intercourse.

In the second part, "Sense and Sexuality," Levine proposes "ways of rethinking our approaches to kids' sexuality … based on a simple belief: erotic pleasure is a gift and can be a positive joy to people at every age." Levine provides examples of several successful approaches people have employed to reduce fear and promote intellectual and emotional engagement with issues of sexuality.

The fear that Harmful deconstructs also propelled the outcry and prompted the rejection of Harmful for publication by many different publishing houses. It is this same fear that prompted the University of Minnesota to succumb to pressure to commence the review of the U of M Press. This external review "conclude[d] that the Press not only meets the standards and norms of American university press publishing, but is in many respects more rigorous than most." This leaves unanswered the question of why the University thought the review was needed. What does this say about the future of academic presses publishing controversial materials? The reigning social/political ideology reinforces a panoply of fears that threaten all free discussions inside of or in any way sponsored by public institutions.

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Let's Get Free is a new zine created by the Defense Network for ELF prisoner Jeff "Free" Luers. Serving a 22 year sentence for burning 2 SUVs in the summer of '00, Free continues to fight for his freedom through the legal system, and to speak out for the liberation of all life. This zine is a major forum for Free's writings, and a useful introduction to his case and his motivations for those who are just learning about radical eco-defense. The zine features reprints of mainstream media reports, letters and op/eds (some by Free himself), Free's poetry, personal letters of support from Lorenzo Ervin and Grand Jury resistor Josh Harper, and an interview between Free and another Oregon anarchist prisoner, Rob "Los Ricos" Thaxton.

Defining Anarchy?

FIGHTING FOR OUR LIVES
8x11—24 pages
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FFOL is the newest offering from our bohemian, class traitor, lifestyle anarchist buddies at CrimethInc. They printed 250,000 copies of this free, newsprint pamphlet, intending to reach both self-identified anarchists and ordinary folks who might otherwise be alienated by anarchist rhetoric. *FFOL* very clearly advocates for anarchy, but in simple language discusses "what is anarchist in everyday life, and how those spheres of cooperation can be expanded." In typical CrimethInc. fashion, FFOL explains: "We're not trying to speak for everyone, but to make it clear that everyone can speak; we're not trying to define anarchy for everyone, but to undermine misunderstandings so everyone can begin that conversation afresh. Interested distributors are asked to "put copies at every record store, farmers' market, bookshop, and high school -- or anyplace your fancy strikes..."

2003 RADICAL CALENDAR

Please send calendar events to the Fifth Estate keeping in mind our quarterly schedule. We are especially interested in events for the Spring and Summer of '03 to be published in our next edition.
fifthestatenewspaper@yahoo.com PO Box 6 Liberty, TN 37095

December 21 - (Winter Solstice) Everywhere. You are invited to join a national mobilization of creative, autonomous local acts of resistance to the war at shopping malls around the country on the last Saturday before Xmas. We encourage invasion of shopping malls across the country to disallow business as usual and tell consumers, "Stop the buying! Stop the dying!" For more info: tcap@mutualaid.org

January 15-20—The **Iraq Pledge of Resistance**, a campaign of nationally coordinated nonviolent civil disobedience to opposee war in Iraq is calling for national days of action. Check out www.peacepledge.org, or call 301-589-2355.

January 18-19—No War in Iraq! Washington DC. Mass demonstration - 1/18. The convening of a grassroots peace congress - 1/19. http://www.InternationalANSWER.org dc@internationalanswer.org / iacenter@iacenter.org

January 24-26—National Conference on Organized Resistance (NCOR). Washington, DC. This conference helps in coordinating a dialogue between activist groups, and sparking in-depth discussion of the strategies and tactics of our various social justice movements.
For more info: http://www.organizedresistance.org /

January 24-26—Against Patriarchy Conference. Eugene, OR. http://www.againstpatriarchy.org

January 24-28—Protest the World Economic Forum. Davos, Switzerland. Also, the World Social Forum will be in Porto Alegre, Brazil. See: www.portoalegre2003.org

March 8—International Womens' Strike on International Womens' Day. www.womenstrike8m.server101.com

March 14-16—Southern Girls' Convention. Asheville, NC. Call (828) 771-4061 for details.

March 28-31—Mid-Atlantic Womens' Rights and Empowerment Conference. James Madison University, Harrisonburg, VA. jmuequal@yahoo.com

March 29—Bay Area Anarchist Book Fair. San Francisco, CA. 10 am - 6 pm. $60 fee for a table. Contact Bound Together Books 1369 Haight St. SF, CA. 94117 (415)

April 19—Visions in Feminism Conference. University of Maryland, College Park, MD. "Redefining Global Boundaries and Responsibilities". visionsinfeminism@hotmail.com

May 3-5—Conference on "Anti-Patriarchial Struggles Within the Anarchist Movement". Montreal, Quebec. Events include a talk by Martha Ackelsberg, the author of "Free Women of Spain", a film on the Mujeres Libres, and workshops. Anyone wishing to give a talk or workshop should contact the Montreal Anarchist Bookfair collective (see below). Workshop proposals due March 1, 2003

May 16-20 - Mass Protests in response to the Monsanto-sponsored World Agricultural Forum. Say NO to Corporate Greed and the Raping of the Seed! St. Louis, MO. Contact: fitzdon@aol.com www.worldagforum.org / www.biodev.org

May 17-18—The 4th Annual (and largest in the Northeast) Montreal Anarchist Bookfair. Montreal, Quebec. Bookfair will be held Saturday, 5/17 from 10-6. Festival of Anarchy will take place Sunday, 5/18 with workshops, films, poetry, exhibitions, readings, presentations, etc…
Contact: bookfair2003@ziplip.com, or call: 514-844-3207 http://www.tao.ca/~lombrenoire

June 1-3—G8 Meeting. Evian Les Bouis, France. See: www.france.indymedia.org

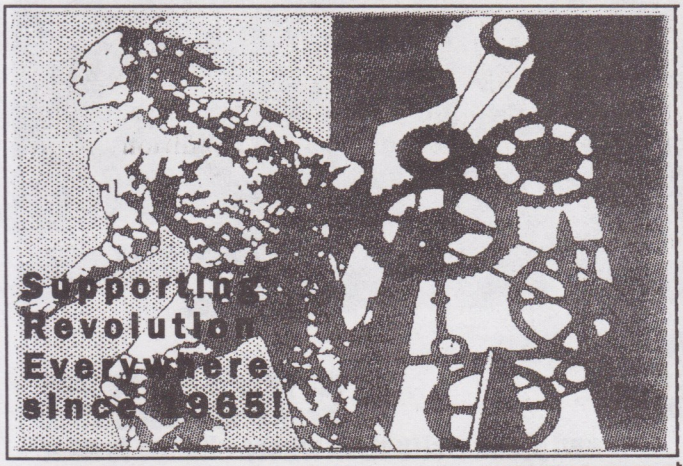
June 5-8th & June 12-15th—"Food For Life" Workshops on all aspects of food: preservation, growing, diet, philosophy, cooking, politics, etc... Hosted by the Sequatchie Valley Institute at Moonshadow:
Route One Box 304 Whitwell, TN 37397 / 423-949-5922 / mediarights@bledsoe.net / www.svionline.org

June 20-22—BioDevastation/BioJustice. Washington, DC. A demonstration in response to the annual convention of the Biotechnology Industry Organization.
Contact: larcher@foe.org. www.biodev.org

(Also happening: An educational bicycle caravan connecting the St. Louis and DC events, with stops in cities all along the way! Contact milkmefarmboy@hotmail.com)

July 4 week—Earth First! Round River Rendezvous. Minnesota. Check www.earthfirstjournal.org for details

July 18-27th—Natural Building Workshop. Come learn alternative, earth friendly ways of building a home. Hosted by the Sequatchie Valley Institute at Moonshadow (see above).



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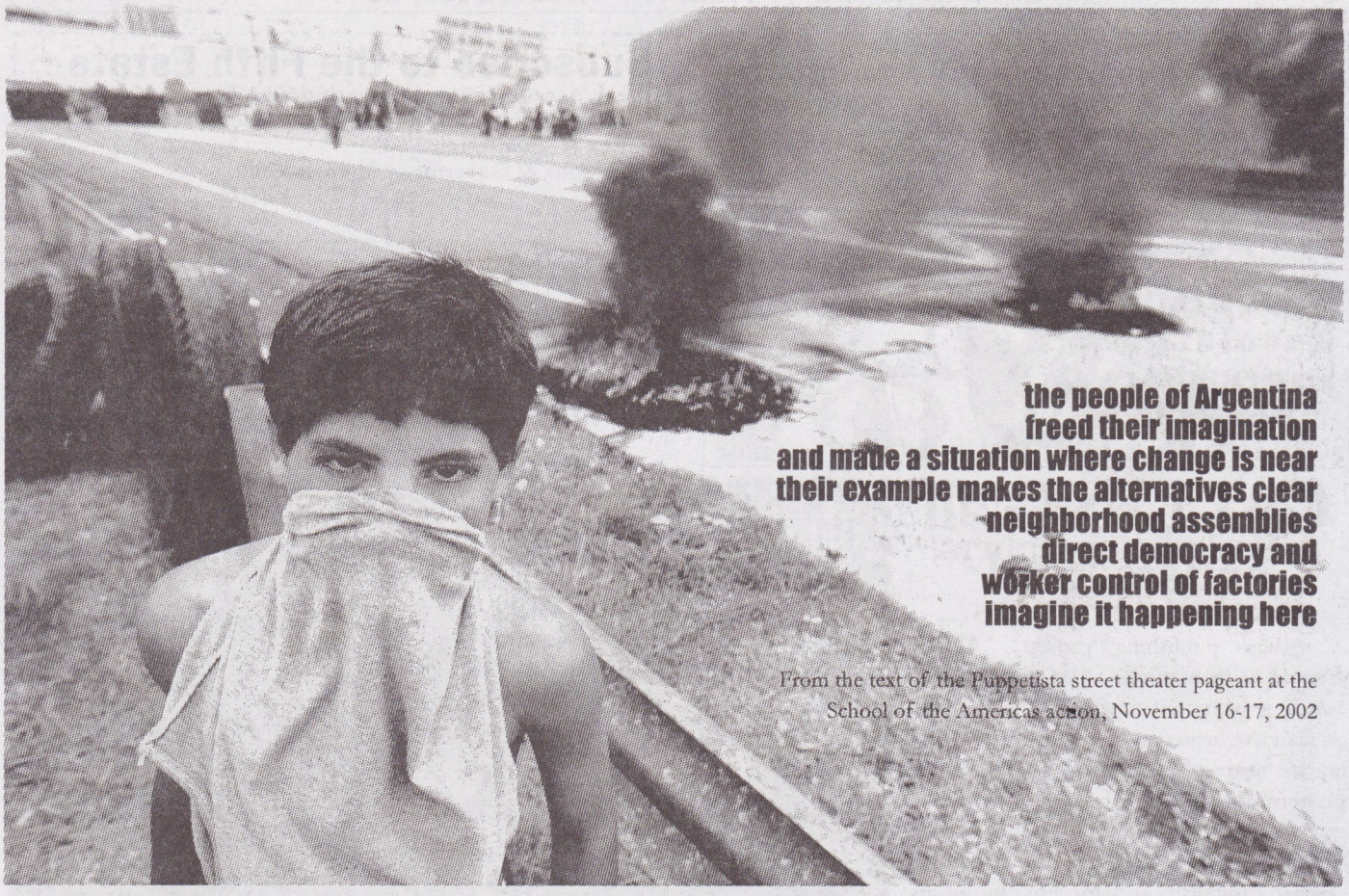

the people of Argentina
freed their imagination
and made a situation where change is near
their example makes the alternatives clear
neighborhood assemblies
direct democracy and
worker control of factories
imagine it happening here

From the text of the Puppetista street theater pageant at the School of the Americas action, November 16-17, 2002

Perhaps the most realistic thing to imagine at the beginning of this already war-torn century is a system free of capitalism, one without banks, without poverty, without despair, a system whose currency is creativity and hope, a system that rewards cooperation rather than competition, a system that values the will of the people over the rule of the market. One day we may look back at the absurdity of the present and remember how the people of Argentina inspired us to demand the impossible, and invited us to build new worlds which spread outwards from our own neighborhoods.

John Jordan and Jennifer Whitney

Fifth Estate
PO Box 201016
Ferndale, MI 48220

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